This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07482386 9

THE CANTERBURY TALES

OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER

A NEW TEXT

WITH ILLUSTRATIVE

NOTES

EDITED BY

THOMAS WRIGHT, ESQ. M.A. F.S.A. ETC.

Corresponding Member of the Institute of France (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres)

VOLUME THE FIRST

LONDON

PRINTED FOR THE PERCY SOCIETY

BY T. RICHARDS, ST. MARTIN'S LANE

MDCCCXLVII

V.S

COUNCIL

OF

The Percy Society.

President,

THE RIGHT HON. LORD BRAYBROOKE, F.S.A.

THOMAS AMYOT, Esq. F.R.S., Treas. S.A.

WILLIAM HENRY BLACK, Esq.

J. PAYNE COLLIER, Esq. F.S.A.

BOLTON CORNEY, Esq.

T. CROFTON CROKER, Esq. F.S.A., M.R.I.A.

J. H. DIXON, Esq.

FREDERICK WILLIAM FAIRHOLT, Esq. F.S.A.

JAMES ORCHARD HALLIWELL, Esq. F.R.S., F.S.A.

WILLIAM JERDAN, Esq. M.R.S.L.

CAPTAIN JOHNS, R.M.

J. S. MOORE, Esq.

T. J. PETTIGREW, Esq. F.R.S., F.S.A.

JAMES PRIOR, Esq. F.S.A.

WILLIAM SANDYS, Esq. F.S.A.

THOMAS WRIGHT, Esq. M.A., F.S.A., *Secretary & Treasurer.*

INTRODUCTION.

For about two centuries after the Norman conquest, Anglo-Norman was almost exclusively the language of literature in this country. The few exceptions belong to the last expiring remains of an older and totally different Anglo-Saxon style, or to the first attempts of a new English one, formed upon a Norman model. Of the two grand monuments of the poetry of this period, Layamon belongs to the former of these classes, and the singular poem entitled the *Ormulum* to the latter. After the middle of the thirteenth century, the attempts at poetical composition in English became more frequent and more successful, and previous to the age of Chaucer we have several poems of a very remarkable character, and some good imitations of the harmony and spirit of the French versification of the time.

During this latter period, there had been a great movement in intelligence and art throughout

Europe, which was shewing itself sometimes in one place and sometimes in another, and which was giving great promises of a splendid future. By the end of the thirteenth century it broke out in Italy in Dante, and a little later in Petrarch. In France it shewed itself in a multitude of poetical compositions, remarkable for their spirit and harmony of versification. In England it became magnificently embodied in Chaucer, almost to rise and die with him; for two centuries passed away before another poet was produced who could lay any claim to rivalry with his great predecessor.

According to the best information that can be collected, Geoffrey Chaucer was born somewhere near the year 1328,* his family being apparently citizens of London. The accounts of his earlier

* The following brief notice of the personal history of the poet is little more than an abridgment of the *Life of Chaucer* by Sir Harris Nicolas, who has gathered together a mass of curious facts from the public records, many of them not known before. To that biographical sketch, which is prefixed to Mr. Pickering's last edition of Tyrwhitt's text, I refer those who are desirous of learning everything that is really known of Chaucer's life, which had been disfigured by previous biographers with a mass of details founded only on mistakes, or drawn from the imaginations of the writers. I have no wish to rewrite what Sir Harris Nicolas has already done with so much judgment, but it will probably be expected that I should give here the outlines of the life of the author I am editing.

years and of his education are vague and unsatisfactory, but he was certainly a man of extensive learning, and he had the education of a gentleman: he is generally believed to have been bred to the law. We learn from Chaucer's own testimony, given at a later period, in the case of the Grosvenor peerage, that in the autumn of 1359 he was in the army with which Edward III invaded France, which was his first military service, and that he was made prisoner by the French during the expedition which terminated with the peace of Chartres, in May 1360.

We know nothing further of Chaucer's history until 1367, when a pension of twenty marks yearly for life was granted by the king to the poet, as one of the valets of the king's chamber, in consideration of his services. About the same time, he married Philippa, one of the ladies in attendance on the queen, who is said to have been the eldest daughter of Sir Payne Roet, king-of-arms of Guienne, and sister of Katherine, widow of Sir Hugh Swynford, and subsequently wife of John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster. In 1370, as we find from the records, Chaucer was employed in the king's service abroad. Two years after this, on the 12th November 1372, the poet was sent on a mission to Genoa, to treat on the choice of a port in England where the Genoese might form a com-

mercial establishment; he appears to have remained in Italy nearly a year, as we do not trace him in England until the latter part of November 1373, and we then find by the allowance of his expenses that he had been on the king's service to Florence as well as to Genoa. We are, unfortunately, in perfect ignorance of Chaucer's movements in Italy; and the statement of the old biographers that he visited Petrarch at Padua, is founded on mere suppositions totally unsupported by any known evidence. It can hardly be believed, however, that Chaucer did not profit by the opportunity thus afforded him of improving his acquaintance with the poetry, if not with the poets, of the country he thus visited, whose influence was now being felt on the literature of most countries of Western Europe. He was evidently well acquainted with the writings of Dante, and probably with those of Petrarch, if not with those of Boccaccio. He distinctly quotes the former poet more than once, thus:—

> "Wel can the wyse poet of Florence,
> That hatte Daunt, speke of this sentence."
>
> *C. T.* 6707.

The "sentence," as Chaucer gives it, is almost a literal translation from the *Purgatorio*. It may be observed, also, that the inference from this and other circumstances is strongly in favour of the

belief that Chaucer was well acquainted with the Italian language, which Sir Harris Nicolas doubts, I think without sufficient reason.

That Chaucer acquitted himself well as an ambassador, and that the king was satisfied with his services, we can have no doubt; for on the 23rd of April following, the monarch made him a grant for life of a pitcher of wine daily, an appropriate gift for a poet, but which nevertheless seems to have been soon commuted for the payment of its value in money. About six weeks after this, on the 8th of June 1374, Chaucer was appointed comptroller of the customs and subsidy of wools, skins, and tanned hides in the port of London; and it was stipulated that he should write the rolls of his office with his own hand, and perform his duties personally and not by deputy. This might be supposed to shew that Chaucer's poetical talents were not very generously appreciated; but it appears in reality that it was a mere formula of the grant of the office. From this time to the end of the reign of Edward III, the poet continued to enjoy the royal favour; and he not only received several marks of his sovereign's generosity, but he was employed frequently in public service of importance. During the last year of Edward's reign, A. D. 1377, he was sent successively to Flanders and to France, being in the first mission associated

previous office of comptroller of the customs and subsidies; and in February 1385, he obtained the still greater favour of being allowed to nominate a permanent deputy, by which the poet must have been partially released from duties which can never have been agreeable to his tastes.

Several circumstances shew that Chaucer had some intimate connexion with the county of Kent, where he probably held property; and he was elected a knight of the shire for that county in the parliament which met at Westminster on the 1st of October 1386, and which closed its session on the 1st of November following; shortly after which (before the 4th of December 1386), Chaucer was dismissed from his employments, but for what reason we have not the slightest intimation, though it was doubtless connected with some of the petty intrigues of this intriguing reign. Probably, as Sir Harris Nicolas supposes, he had become obnoxious to the duke of Gloucester and the other ministers who had succeeded his patron, the duke of Lancaster, in the government, and it is well known that the proceedings of the parliament just alluded to were directed against the duke of Lancaster's party.

We know nothing further of Chaucer's history until the year 1388, except that he continued regularly to receive his two pensions of twenty

marks each; but on the 1st of May in the latter year, the grants of these pensions were, at his request, cancelled, and the annuities assigned to John Scalby, which has been considered as a proof that the poet was at that time in distress, and obliged to sell his pensions. Exactly a year after this, in May 1389, on the young king's assumption of the reins of government, the duke of Lancaster's party were restored to power, and Chaucer again appeared at court. On the 12th of July, the poet was appointed to the valuable office of clerk of the king's works at the palace of Westminster, the Tower of London, the castle of Berkhemstead, and the royal manors of Kennington, Eltham, Clarendon, Sheen, Byfleet, Childern Langley, and Feckenham, at the royal lodge of Hathenbergh in the New Forest, at the lodges in the parks of Clarendon, Childern Langley, and Feckenham, and at the mews for the king's falcons at Charing Cross. He was expressly permitted to perform his duties by deputy, and his salary was fixed at two shillings a day. Chaucer held this office, however, only two years, having been dismissed from it before the 16th of September 1391, but the cause of his removal is unknown.

During the latter years of Richard's reign, Chaucer was evidently suffering from poverty, for instead of receiving as formerly his pension in

half-yearly payments when due, we find him constantly taking sums in advance; and, as these were not always paid into his own hands, we are led to suppose that he was suffering from sickness, as well as from want. He was now aged, as well as poor and needy; but the accession of Henry IV came suddenly to cast a gleam of brightness on his declining days. Within four days after he came to the throne, Henry granted him, on the 3rd of October 1399, a yearly pension of forty marks, in addition to the annuity of twenty pounds which had been given him by king Richard. On Christmas eve, 1399, the poet obtained the lease of a house near Westminster Abbey, where it is probable that he closed his days. His name appears in the issue rolls, as continuing to receive his pension, until the 1st of March 1400, when it was received for him by Henry Somere, the clerk of the receipt of the exchequer, who is supposed to have been a relation of the "frere John Somere," whose calendar is mentioned in Chaucer's treatise on the Astrolabe. Chaucer is stated, and with probable correctness, in an epitaph placed in 1550 near his grave in Westminster Abbey by Nicholas Brigham (a poet of that time), to have died on the 25th of October 1400, at which time, according to the supposed date of his birth, he would have reached the age of seventy-two.

The above are all the circumstances of importance connected with the life of Chaucer that are known to be true. Although, in the document in which they are found, he is looked upon only as an actor in the eventful politics of the day, we have other evidence that his poetical talents were highly appreciated by his contemporaries, as well as in the age which followed his death. By the English poets of his time, Gower and Occleve, he is spoken of in the warmest terms of praise; and that his reputation was high on the continent, we have a remarkable proof in a ballad addressed to him by the French poet Eustace Deschamps, which has been printed in Sir Harris Nicolas's *Life*, and in my *Anecdota Literaria*. This latter document shews us, also, that Chaucer was on terms of friendship at least with the French poets of his day. Occleve not only paid a tribute of affection to his "maister" in his poetry, but he painted his portrait in the margin of the manuscript, and this portrait, evidently a good one, was copied at different times and in different forms, and was no doubt the original of all the portraits of Chaucer we now have. The best copy appears to be that in the Harleian MS., No. 4866.

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

Chaucer's capital work is doubtless the *Canter-*

bury Tales. The idea of thus joining together a number of stories by means of a connecting narrative, or frame, appears to have originated in the East; but long before the time of Chaucer it had been made popular in Europe by the *Disciplina Clericalis* of Peter Alfonsi, and its translations, and by the still more widely spread romance of the *Seven Sages.* It is probable that the latter, of which an edition has been published by the Percy Society, gave Chaucer the hint of his plot, rather than the *Decameron,* with which I think it doubtful if Chaucer were acquainted. But Chaucer's plan was far superior to that of any of the similar collections which had preceded it, not only for the opportunity it afforded for diversity of style in the stories, but for the variety of character it admitted in the personages to be introduced. The general introduction to the *Canterbury Tales* is one of the most perfect compositions in the English language.

The *Canterbury Tales* appear to have been the compilation of Chaucer's latter years; for they contain allusions to events so late as the year 1386, and if (as there appears little room for doubt) there are allusions in the *Man of Lawes Tale* to the *Confessio Amantis* of Gower, this part of the work must have been written at a still later period, as that poem is stated by its author to have been written in the sixteenth year of the reign of

Richard II, *i. e.* 1392-3. I have used the word compilation, because it appears to me not only evident that Chaucer composed the *Canterbury Tales* not continuously, but in different portions which were afterwards to be joined together; but it is more than probable that he worked up into it tales which had originally been written and perhaps published as separate poems. Chaucer tells us, in the *Legend of Good Women*, that he had thus published the *Knightes Tale*,—

> " —— al the love of Palamon and Arcite,
> Of Thebes, though the storie is knowen lite;"

as well as the life of St. Cecilia, or the *Second Nonnes Tale*,—

> " And made the life also of Saint Cecile."

It is quite clear that we possess the *Canterbury Tales* in an unfinished form. Tyrwhitt makes the following general observations on this subject:—

" The general plan of the *Canterbury Tales* may be learned in a great measure from the prologue, which Chaucer himself has prefixed to them. He supposes there, that a company of pilgrims going to Canterbury assemble at an inn in Southwark, and agree, that, for their common amusement on the road, each of them shall tell at least one tale in going to Canterbury, and another in coming back from thence; and that he who shall tell the

best tales, shall be treated by the rest with a supper upon their return to the same inn. This is shortly the *fable*. The *characters* of the pilgrims are as various as, at that time, could be found in the several departments of *middle* life; that is, in fact, as various as could, with any probability, be brought together, so as to form one company; the highest and the lowest ranks of society being necessarily excluded. It appears further, that the design of Chaucer was not barely to recite the tales told by the pilgrims, but also to describe their journey, *And all the remnant of* their *pilgrimage* [ver. 726]; including, probably, their adventures at Canterbury as well as upon the road. If we add, that the tales, besides being nicely adapted to the characters of their respective relators, were intended to be connected together by suitable introductions, and interspersed with diverting episodes; and that the greatest part of them was to have been executed in verse: we shall have a tolerable idea of the extent and difficulty of the whole undertaking: and admiring, as we must, the vigour of that genius, which in an advanced age could begin so vast a work, we shall rather lament than be surprised that it has been left imperfect. In truth, if we compare those parts of the *Canterbury Tales*, of which we are in possession, with the sketch which has been just given of the intended whole,

it will be found that more than one half is wanting. The prologue we have, perhaps, nearly complete, and the greatest part of the journey to Canterbury; but not a word of the transactions at Canterbury, or of the journey homeward, or of the epilogue, which, we may suppose, was to have concluded the work, with an account of the prize-supper and the separation of the company. Even in that part which we have of the journey to Canterbury, it will be necessary to take notice of certain defects and inconsistencies, which can only be accounted for upon the supposition, that the work was never finished by the author."

After a careful consideration of this question, I am inclined to believe that Chaucer not only left his grand poem in an unfinished state, but that he left it in detached portions only partially arranged, and that it was reduced to its present form after his death. This would explain satisfactorily the great variations of the manuscripts in the order of the tales, and the evident want of the connecting prologue in more than one instance. All the manuscripts agree in the order of the tales of the knight, miller, reve, and cook, and in placing them immediately after the general prologue, and it is therefore probable that they were left in that state by Chaucer. The *Cookes Tale* was evidently left unfinished by the author, and it was probably the

person who reduced the whole to its present form that first introduced the tale of Gamelyn to fill up what he supposed a *lacuna*, but whence he obtained this tale it is difficult to conjecture. Tyrwhitt is so entirely wrong in saying that this tale is not found in any manuscript of the first authority, that it occurs in the Harleian MS., from which the present text is taken, and which I have no hesitation in stating to be the best and oldest manuscript of Chaucer I have yet met with. The style of Gamelyn would lead us to judge that it is not Chaucer's, but we can only reconcile this judgment with its being found so universally in the manuscripts, by means of the supposition of the posthumous arrangement of the *Canterbury Tales*, and its insertion by the arranger. I have printed the tale of Gamelyn from the same Harleian MS. which has been the base of my text of the remainder of the poem; but I have distinguished it from the rest by printing it in smaller type, both on account of the apparently well-founded doubts of its being a genuine work of Chaucer, and in order not to interfere with the numbering of the lines in Tyrwhitt's edition, which I have thought it advisable to preserve.

After the *Cookes Tale*, the order of the tales differs very much in different manuscripts, until we arrive at the tale of the Maniciple, with which,

and the *Parson's Tale*, they all conclude. In the present text, I have strictly followed the Harleian manuscript, which agrees nearly with the order adopted by Tyrwhitt. The *Man of Lawes Tale* is not connected by its prologue with the tale which precedes it; and the *Wyf of Bathes Tale* evidently wants a few introductory lines, which Chaucer would have added had he lived to complete the poem. It is not improbable that in the state in which he left it, the Wife of Bath's prologue was the beginning of a portion of manuscript which contained the tales of the Wife of Bath, the Friar, and the Sompnour; and perhaps those of the Clerk, the Merchant, and the Squier, formed another portion. This latter portion appears to have been left unfinished, for the *Squieres Tale* breaks off abruptly in the middle, which is the more to be regretted, as it is one of Chaucer's best stories, and it is a story not found elsewhere. It appears by its prologue, that the *Frankeleynes Tale* was intended to follow the *Squieres Tale*. The *Second Nonnes Tale*, or the life of St. Cecilia, has no prologue, and appears to be in the same form in which it was originally written for separate publication. The prologue to the *Chanones Yemannes Tale* shews that this latter was intended to follow the life of St. Cecilia. These two tales are placed, in Tyrwhitt's edition, after the tale of

the Nun's Priest. Of the tales of the Doctour and the Pardoner we can only say that they were clearly intended to come together, though they are differently placed in manuscripts with respect to those which precede and follow. The tales of the Shipman, the Prioress, Chaucer's two tales of Sir Thopas and Melibeus, the Monk's tale, and the tale of the Nun's Priest, are all connected together by their prologues, and appear to have occupied another portion of Chaucer's manuscript, which also was apparently defective at the end, the prologue which was to have connected it with the next tale being unfinished. The prologue to the tale of the Manciple contains no reference to a preceding tale, but from the way in which the Cook is introduced in it, it would seem to have been composed at a time when Chaucer did not intend to introduce the Cook's tale after that of the Reve. The Parson's tale is connected by its prologue with that of the Manciple, and follows it in all the manuscripts. The old printed editions after 1542, inserted between these a poem, which was evidently misplaced, under the title of the *Plowman's Tale*, but on what authority it was placed there we are totally ignorant. The "retractation," at the end of the *Parsones Tale*, was perhaps introduced by the person who arranged the text after Chaucer's death.

With the tale, or rather discourse, of the Parson, Chaucer brings his pilgrims to Canterbury; but his original plan evidently included the journey back to London. Some writer, within a few years after Chaucer's death, undertook to continue the work, and produced a ludicrous account of the proceedings of the pilgrims at Canterbury, and the story of Beryn, which was to be the first of the stories told on their return. These are printed by Urry from a manuscript of which I have not been able to trace the subsequent history, and, if it should not previously be found, I shall reprint them from Urry's edition, correcting the more apparent errors, for Urry's faithlessness to his manuscript is quite extraordinary.

The immense popularity of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is proved by the number of manuscript copies still remaining. It was one of the first books printed in England, and went through a considerable number of editions before the seventeenth century. For the information of those who are interested in the biographical portion of a subject like this, I give Tyrwhitt's history of the printed editions of the *Canterbury Tales*, omitting some of the notes.

"The art of printing had been invented and exercised for a considerable time, in most countries of Europe, before the art of criticism was called

in to superintend and direct its operations. It is therefore much more to the honour of our meritorious countryman, William Caxton, that he chose to make the *Canterbury Tales* one of the earliest productions of his press, than it can be to his discredit that he printed them very incorrectly. He probably took the first MS. that he could procure to print from, and it happened unluckily to be one of the worst in all respects that he could possibly have met with. The very few copies of this edition which are now remaining,* have no date, but Mr. Ames supposes it to have been printed in 1475 or 6.

"It is still more to the honour of Caxton, that when he was informed of the imperfections of his edition, he very readily undertook a second, 'for to satisfy the author,' (as he says himself,) 'whereas tofore by ignorance *he* had erred in hurting and diffaming his book.' His whole account of this matter, in the preface to this second edition, is so clear and ingenuous, that I shall insert it below

* "The late Mr. West was so obliging as to lend me a complete copy of this edition, which is now, as I have heard, in the King's Library. There is another complete copy in the library of Merton College, which is illuminated, and has a ruled line under every printed one, to give it the appearance, I suppose, of a MS. Neither of these books, though seemingly complete, has any preface or advertisement."

in his own words.* This edition is also without date, except that the preface informs us, that it was printed six years after the first.

---

* "Preface to Caxton's second edition from a copy in the Library of St. John's College Oxford. Ames, p. 55.—Whiche book I have dylygently oversen, and duly examyned to the ende that it be made accordyng unto his owen makyng; for I fynde many of the sayd bookes, whiche wryters have abrydgyd it, and many thynges left out, and in some places have sette certayn versys that he never made ne sette in hys booke; of whyche bookes so incorrecte was one broughte to me VI. yere passyd, whiche I supposed had ben veray true and correcte, and accordyng to the same I dyde do emprynte a certayn nomber of them, whyche anon were solde to many and dyverse gentylmen, of whom one gentylman cam to me, and sayd that this book was not according in many places unto the book that Gefferey Chaucer had made. To whom I answered, that I had made it accordyng to my copye, and by me was nothyng added ne mynusshyd. Thenne he sayd, he knewe a book whyche hys fader had much lovyd, that was very trewe, and accordyng unto his owen first book by hym made; and sayd more, yf I wold emprynte it agayn, he wold gete me the same book for a copye How be it he wyst well that hys fader wold not gladly departe fro it. To whom I said, in caas that he coude gete me suche a booke, trewe and correcte, yet I wold ones endevoyre me to emprynte it agayn, for to satisfy the auctour, where as tofore by ygnoraunce I crryd in hurtyng and dyffamyng his book in dyverce places, in setting in somme thynges that he never sayd ne made, and leving out many thynges that he made, whyche ben requysite to be sette in it. And thus we fyll at accord, and he full gentylly gate of hys fader the said book, and delyvered it to me, by whiche I have corrected my book, as heere after alle alonge by the ayde of almighty God shal folowe, whom I humbly beseche, &c.

"Mr. Lewis, in his *Life of Caxton*, p. 104, has published

" Ames mentions an edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, ' Collected by William Caxton, and printed by Wynken de Worde at Westmestre, in 1495. Folio.' He does not appear to have seen it himself, nor have I ever met with any other authority for its existence; which however I do not mean to dispute. If there was such an edition, we may be tolerably sure, that it was only a copy of Caxton's.

" This was certainly the case of both Pynson's editions. He has prefixed to both the introductory part of Caxton's Prohemye to his second edition, without the least alteration. In what follows, he says that he purposes to imprint his book [in the first edition] *by a copy of the said Master Caxton* and [in the second] *by a copy of William Caxton's imprinting.** That the copy, mentioned in both these passages, by which Pynson purposed to imprint, was really Caxton's second edition, is evident

---

a minute account of the contents of this edition from a copy in the Library of Magdalen College, Cambridge, but without deciding whether it is the first or the second edition.

" It is undoubtedly the second; but the preface is lost. There is an imperfect copy of this edition in the Museum, and another in the library of the Royal Society. Both together would not make a complete one.

* " See the *Prohemies* to Pynson's first and second editions in the preface to Urry's Chaucer. There is a complete copy of Pynson's first edition in the library of the Royal Society.

from the slightest comparison of the three books, Pynson's first edition has no date, but is supposed (upon good grounds, I think) to have been printed not long after 1491, the year of Caxton's death. His second edition* is dated in 1526, and was the first in which a collection of some other pieces of Chaucer was added to the *Canterbury Tales.*

" The next edition, which I have been able to meet with, was printed by Thomas Godfray in 1532. If this be not the very edition which Leland speaks of as printed by Berthelette, with the assistance of Mr. William Thynne, (as I rather suspect it is,) we may be assured that it was copied from that. Mr. Thynne's dedication to Henry VIII stands at the head of it; and the great number of Chaucer's works, never before published,

* " I venture to call this Pynson's second edition, though Ames (from some notes of Bagford) speaks of editions in 1520 and 1522. He does not appear to have seen them himself. Mr. West had a copy of the edition of 1526, in which the name of the printer and the date of the impression are regularly set down at the end of the *Canterbury Tales.* After that follow '*Troilus and Creseide*' and '*the Boke of Fame,*' at the end of which last is a note, copied from Caxton's edition of the same book, with this addition, *And here foloweth another of his workes.* But in Mr. West's copy nothing followed. The writer of the preface to Ed. Urr. seems to have had the use of a copy of this edition in 1526, which contained some other pieces of Chaucer's, and several by other hands. See the preface to Ed. Urr.

which appear in it, fully entitles it to the commendations, which have always been given to Mr. Thynne's edition on that account. Accordingly, it was several times reprinted as the standard edition of Chaucer's works, without any material alteration, except the insertion of the Plowman's tale in 1542.

"As my business here is solely with the *Canterbury Tales*, I shall take no notice of the several miscellaneous pieces, by Chaucer and others, which were added to them by Mr. Thynne in his edition, and afterwards by Stowe and Speght in the editions of 1561, 1597, and 1602. With respect to the *Canterbury Tales*, I am under a necessity of observing, that, upon the whole, they received no advantage from the edition of 1532. Its material variations from Caxton's *second* edition are all, I think, for the worse. It confounds the order of the *Squier's* and the *Frankelein's* tales, which Caxton, in his *second* edition, had set right. It gives the *Frankelein's* prologue to the *Merchant*, in addition to his own proper prologue. It produces for the first time two prologues, the one to the *Doctour's*, and the other to the *Shipman's* tale, which are both evidently spurious; and it brings back the lines of ribaldry in the *Merchant's* tale, which Caxton, in his *second* edition, had rejected upon the authority of his good MS.

"However, this edition of 1532, with all its imperfections, had the luck, as I have said, to be considered as the standard edition, and to be copied, not only by the booksellers, in their several editions* of 1542, 1546, 1555, and 1561, but also by Mr. Speght, (the first editor in form, after Mr. Thynne, who set his name to his work,) in 1597 and 1602. In the dedication to Sir Robert Cecil, prefixed to this last edition, he speaks indeed of having 'reformed the whole work, both by old written copies and by Ma. William Thynnes praiseworthy labours,' but I cannot find that he has departed in any material point from those editions, which I have supposed to be derived from Mr. Thynne's. In the very material points abovementioned, in which those editions vary from Caxton's second, he has followed *them*. Nor have I observed any such verbal varieties, as would induce one to believe that he had consulted any good MS. They who have read his preface, will pro-

* "There are some other editions mentioned by Ames, without date, but it is probable that, upon inspection, they would appear to be one or other of the editions, whose dates are here given. It seems to have been usual to print books in partnership, and for each partner to print his own name to his share of the impression. See Ames, p. 252. A Bible is said to be printed in 1551, by Nicholas Hill—'at the cost and charges of certayne honest menne of the occupacyon, *whose names be upon their bokes.*'"

bably not regret, that he did not do more towards correcting the text of Chaucer.

"In this state the *Canterbury Tales* remained* till the edition undertaken by Mr. Urry, which was published, some years after his death, in 1721. I shall say but little of that edition, as a very fair and full account of it is to be seen in the modest and sensible preface prefixed to it by Mr. Timothy Thomas, upon whom the charge of publishing Chaucer devolved, or rather was imposed, after Mr. Urry's death. The strange license, in which Mr. Urry appears to have indulged himself, of lengthening and shortening Chaucer's words according to his own fancy, and of even adding

---

* "It may be proper just to take notice, that Mr. Speght's edition was reprinted in 1687, with an advertisement at the end, in which the editor pretended to publish from a MS. *the conclusion of* the Coke's Tale, *and also of* the Squires Tale, *which in the printed books are said to be lost or never finished by the author.* These conclusions may be seen in the Preface to Ed. Urr. Whoever the editor was, I must do him the justice to say, that they are both really to be found in MS. The first is to be found in MS. B*a*. and the other in MS. B. *δ*. from which Hearne has also printed it, as a choice discovery, in his letter to Bagford. App. to R. G. p. 601. If I thought the reader had any relish for such supplements to Chaucer, I could treat him from MS. B. *a*. with at least thirty more lines, which have been inserted in different parts of the *Cook's Tale*, by the same hand that wrote this Conclusion.

words of his own, without giving his readers the least notice, has made the text of Chaucer in his edition by far the worst that was ever published."

PLAN OF THE PRESENT EDITION.

During the latter half of the twelfth century and the earlier part of the thirteenth, the language spoken by our Saxon forefathers was rapidly breaking up, and losing its original grammatical inflections, and much of its characteristic phraseology. Books or songs written in English during this period were intended for the edification of the lower classes, or for the *bourgeoisie*, which still retained its Saxon habits. Great changes in language are generally coeval with political movements and convulsions, and the character of our language was completely changed by the baronial wars of the thirteenth century, which brought into prominence the Anglo-Saxon portion of the population, and made its language fashionable in high society. The consequence was, that it went through further changes in form, and became largely mixed with words having a French (or Anglo-Norman) origin. About the end of the reign of Edward I, the English language took a definite shape, which continued during the fourteenth century with very little alteration in its grammatical forms, and the only alterations in other

respects arising from words becoming obsolete, and from the facility with which French or Anglo-Norman words were adopted or received at the will of the author, and according to the class of society in which he moved and for which he wrote. This arose from the circumstance that English and the form of French spoken here were co-existent in our island as the languages of common life. This form of the English language was that of the author of *Piers Ploughman*, and of Geoffrey Chaucer, the former representing the popular feelings and containing fewest French words, while Chaucer, as the poet of the higher society, uses French words in much greater abundance. In our language of the present day, we have lost as much of the English of *Piers Ploughman*, as we have of the French of the *Canterbury Tales*.

The general character, and the grammatical constructions, of the English of the fourteenth century, were preserved during the opening years of the fifteenth, but they soon began to break up more rapidly even than in the thirteenth century, until, at the time of the Reformation, our language took nearly its modern form, the orthography excepted.

The language in which any man wrote could only be preserved correctly in manuscripts written in his own time, or very near it; for we find by

experience that copyists invariably altered what they copied to the form of the language at the time in which they wrote, and, which is still more embarrassing, to the local dialect of the county in which they lived. It is evident, therefore, that the plan of forming the text of any work of the periods of which we are speaking, from a number of different manuscripts, written at different times and different places, is the most absurd plan which it is possible to conceive. Yet this was the method professedly followed by Tyrwhitt, in forming a text of the *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer. He even did worse: for he seems to have taken for his foundation merely one of the old editions, printed at a time when all the grammatical forms were lost, changing words or lines for others which pleased him better, from any manuscript which happened to contain them. It is true that he has given a list of manuscripts, in which he points out those which he considers the best, and which he followed in preference to others; but Tyrwhitt was so entirely unacquainted with the palæographical and philological knowledge necessary for the appreciation of them, that he places among his manuscripts of "highest authority," copies on paper of the latter part of the fifteenth century, while excellent manuscripts of an earlier date are looked upon with indifference. The more caution is

necessary in this respect with the text of Chaucer, because the greater number of the manuscripts are of the latter part or middle of the fifteenth century, when the language was very much changed from that of Chaucer's time.

Tyrwhitt's entire ignorance of the grammar of the language of Chaucer is exhibited in almost every line, few of which could possibly have been written by the poet as he has printed them. It need only be stated, as an instance of this, that in the preterites of what the modern Teutonic philologists term the strong verbs (which our common grammarians distinguish by the unfortunate title of *irregular* verbs), Tyrwhitt has invariably placed a verb in the plural with a noun in the singular. This is explained by the circumstance that, in our modern form of the language, the ancient plural of the preterite has been adopted for singular as well as plural. Examples of this (in the verbs *to bear*, of which the correct forms were, sing. bar, pl. bare; *to come*, s. cam, pl. come; *to swear*, s. swor, pl. swore; *to give*, s. gaf, pl. gave; *to speak*, s. spak, pl. spake; *to rise*, s. ros, roos, pl. rose; *to take*, s. took, pl. toke; &c.) occur almost in every sentence. In the verb *to sit*, of which the pret. s. and pl. was sette, Tyrwhitt has substituted set, a form which did not exist; and in the same manner, in the verb *to creep*, he has given pret. s. crept, when the forms were

s. creep, crope, pl. crope. In the same manner, Tyrwhitt has in most instances substituted the plural of adjectives for the singular, and the inflected cases of nouns for the nominative, besides an infinity of errors in the orthographical forms of the language.

Under these circumstances it is clear that, to form a satisfactory text of Chaucer, we must give up the printed editions, and fall back upon the manuscripts; and that, instead of bundling them all together, we must pick out one best manuscript which at the same time is one of those nearest to Chaucer's time. The latter circumstance is absolutely necessary, if we would reproduce the language and versification of the author. At the same time, it cannot but be acknowledged, that the earliest manuscript might possibly be very incorrect and incomplete, from the ignorance or negligence of the scribe who copied it. This, however, is fortunately not the case with regard to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.*

The Harleian manuscript, No. 7334, is by far the best manuscript of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* that I have yet examined, in regard both to antiquity and correctness. The hand-writing is one which would at first sight be taken by an experienced scholar for that of the latter part of the fourteenth century, and it must have been written

within a few years after 1400, and therefore soon after Chaucer's death and the publication of the *Canterbury Tales*. Its language has very little, if any, appearance of local dialect; and the text is in general extremely good, the variations from Tyrwhitt being usually for the better. Tyrwhitt appears not to have made much use of this manuscript, and he has not even classed it among those to which most credit is due.

This manuscript I have adopted as the text of the present edition; the alterations I have ventured to make in it being comparatively few, and only such as appeared absolutely necessary. It is hardly necessary to inform those who are in the habit of consulting medieval manuscripts, in whatever language they may be written, that none of them are clerically accurate. Some of them are literally filled with errors, which it requires very little knowledge to perceive and correct. Many errors of this kind are found in the Harleian manuscript of the *Canterbury Tales* of which I am speaking, and I have not felt the least hesitation in correcting them by comparison with another manuscript. As an example of the kind of error to which I allude, it may be stated that ll. 3779, 3780, stand thus in the MS.:—

> Of storial thing that toucheth gentilesse,
> And eek *more ryalté*, and holynesse.

I have, without hesitation, followed another MS. in correcting the two words in italics to *moralité*; and in cases like this I have not thought it necessary to load the book with notes pointing out the alterations. In other instances, where a reading in the Harl. MS., although affording a tolerable meaning, has appeared to me a decided bad one, I have changed it for a better, always (when there is room for the least doubt) giving the original reading of the manuscript in a foot-note. For this purpose, I have collated the text throughout with the Lansdowne MS., No. 851, which appears to be, of those in the British Museum, next in antiquity and value to the MS. Harl.; and I have also collated it, as far as the *Wyf of Bathes Tale*, with two manuscripts in the public library of the University of Cambridge, bearing the shelf-marks Mm. 2. 5. (which I have quoted as C. 1), and Ii. 3, 26 (C. 2), but I found so little real use from these latter manuscripts, that I thought it unnecessary to collate them further. In general, I have reaped little advantage from collating a number of manuscripts.

Tyrwhitt's want of philological knowledge has rendered his text unharmonious as well as ungrammatical. The final *e*, most distinctly pronounced, and which was most necessary to the metrical completeness of the line, was the one

which marked grammatical inflections and adverbial forms, and this he has constantly dropped, and he has therefore printed an imperfect line, or given it supposed perfection by adding a word or placing a final *e* to a word which ought not to have it. I may observe, that it was a constant rule to elide the final *e* in pronunciation, when it preceded a word beginning with a vowel or with the letter *h*, and that this was the source of frequent errors of the scribes, who, pronouncing the lines as they copied them, omitted sometimes to write the letter which they did not pronounce, and thus made a grammatical error, which, however, every reader at the time could see and correct. Instances of this kind of error are not of unfrequent occurrence in the Harl. MS. of the *Canterbury Tales*, but I have resisted the temptation to correct them, because it appeared to me dangerous, in our present knowledge of medieval English, to presume too far on our acquaintance with every nicety of the grammar of the fourteenth century. In many cases, however, these are certainly errors. Thus in l. 5911:—

"Have thou ynough, what thar the *recch* or care."

We ought to read *recche*, which is the infinitive of the verb. For the same reason, in l. 6128,—

"And for to *walk* in March, Averil, and May,"

we should read *walke*. In both these instances

the final *e* has been lost before a word beginning with a vowel. The older termination of the infinitive was in *en*, but the *n* was subsequently dropped, and during the fourteenth century, and earlier part of the fifteenth, the two terminations of the infinitive in *en* and *e* were used indiscriminately, at the will or caprice of the writer. In poetry, before a word beginning with a consonant, it was immaterial which form was used, but before a word beginning with a vowel, or with *h*, the *n* might be dropt or retained accordingly as the final syllable of the word was required or not for the metre. In these cases the scribe has not unfrequently omitted the *n* when it ought to have been retained; but probably the thing was so well understood, that it mattered little how it was written, the reader using the *n* or not as the verse required it, whether he saw it in the manuscript or not.

With the exception of the cases above-mentioned, I have reproduced the text of the Harleian MS. with literal accuracy. My object has been to give Chaucer, as far as can be done, in his own language, which certainly has not yet been done in print. I doubt much if the different attempts at half or wholly modernizing his language, which have been made in latter years, will ever render him popular; and *his* poetry is

Harleian MS., and I have inserted without numbering them the lines of the Harleian MS. which are not found in Tyrwhitt, adding in every instance a note to explain the apparent irregularity. In this manner, the references to Tyrwhitt's *Chaucer* will suit equally with the present edition.

THE

CANTERBURY TALES.

The Canterbury Pilgrims, from an illuminated MS. R-g. 18. D. ii.

THE PROLOGUE.

WHAN that Aprille with his schowres swoote
The drought of Marche hath perced to the roote,
And bathud every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertue engendred is the flour;—
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth

Enspirud hath in every holte and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours i-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodie,
That slepen al the night with open yhe,
So priketh hem nature in here corages:—
Thanne longen folk to gon on pilgrimages,
And palmers for to seeken straunge strondes,
To ferne halwes, kouthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every schires ende
Of Engelond, to Canturbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seeke,
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.

Byfel that, in that sesoun on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabbard as I lay,
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Canturbury with ful devout corage,
At night was come into that hostelrie
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure i-falle
In felaschipe, and pilgryms were thei alle,
That toward Canturbury wolden ryde.
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esud atte beste.

8.—*the Ram.* Tyrwhitt thinks Chaucer has made a mistake, and that it ought to be the Bull, because, the showers of April having pierced the drouth of March to the root, the sun must have passed through the sign of the Ram and entered that of the Bull.

14.—*ferne.* Nearly all the MSS. I have examined, and certainly the best, agree in this reading. Tyrwhitt has adopted the reading *serve*, which probably originated in mistaking "ferne" for "ferue,"—*ferne halwes* means *distant saints*.

And schortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everychon,
That I was of here felawschipe anon,
And made forward erly to aryse,
To take oure weye ther as I yow devyse.
But natheles, whiles I have tyme and space,
Or that I ferthere in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acordant to resoun,
To telle yow alle the condicioun
Of eche of hem, so as it semed me,
And which they weren, and of what degré;
And eek in what array that they were inne:
And at a knight than wol I first bygynne.

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
That from the tyme that he ferst bigan
To ryden out, he lovede chyvalrye,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curtesie.
Ful worthi was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden, noman ferre,
As wel in Cristendom as in hethenesse,
And evere honoured for his worthinesse.
At Alisandre he was whan it was wonne.
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bygonne

43.—*A knight.* It was a common thing, in this age, for knights to seek employment in foreign countries which were at war. Tyrwhitt cites from Leland the epitaph of a knight of this period, Matthew de Gournay, who "*en sa vie fu à la bataille de Benamarin, et ala après à la siege d'Algezire sur les Sarasines, et aussi à les batailles de L'Escluse, de Cressy, de Deyngenesse, de Peyteres, de Nazare, d'Ozrey, et à pulsours autres batailles et asseges.*"

51.—*Alisandre.* Alexandria, in Egypt, was taken by Pierre de Lusignan, king of Cyprus, in 1365, but immediately afterwards abandoned.

Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce. 53
In Lettowe hadde reyced and in Ruce,
No cristen man so ofte of his degré.
In Gernade atte siege hadde he be
Of Algesir, and riden in Belmarie.
At Lieys was he, and at Satalie,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Greete see
At many a noble arive hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he ben fiftene, 61
And foughten for oure feith at Tramassene
In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.
This ilke worthi knight hadde ben also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye,
Ageyn another hethene in Turkye:
And everemore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
And though that he was worthy he was wys, 68
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yit no vilonye ne sayde
In al his lyf, unto no maner wight.
He was a verray perfight gentil knight.
But for to telle you of his aray:
His hors was good, but he ne was nought gay. 74

53.—*Pruce.* The knights of the Teutonic order, in Prussia, were engaged in continual warfare with their pagan neighbours in Lithuania (*Lettowe*), Russia, &c.

56.—*Gernade.* The city of Algezir was taken from the Moorish king of Granada, in 1344. Belmarie appears to have been one of the Moorish states in Africa. Layas (*Lieys*) in Armenia, was taken from the Turks by Pierre de Lusignan, about 1367. Satalie was taken by the same prince soon after 1352. Tremessen was one of the Moorish states in Africa. Palathia, in Anatolia, was one of the lordships held by Christian knights after the Turkish conquests.

Of fustyan he wered a gepoun
Al bysmoterud with his haburgeoun,
For he was late comen from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.
With him ther was his sone, a yong SQUYER,
A lovyer, and a lusty bacheler,
With lokkes crulle as they were layde in presse.
Of twenty yeer he was of age I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
And wondurly delyver, and gret of strengthe.
And he hadde ben somtyme in chivachie,
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and in Picardie,
And born him wel, as in so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrowdid was he, as it were a mede
Al ful of fresshe floures, white and reede.
Syngynge he was, or flowtynge, al the day,
He was as fressh as is the moneth of May.
Schort was his goune, with sleeves long and wyde.
Wel cowde he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.
He cowde songes wel make and endite,
Justne and eek daunce, and wel purtray and write.
So hote he lovede, that by nightertale
He sleep nomore than doth a nightyngale.
Curteys he was, lowly, and servysable,

85.—*chivachie.* Every reader of the contemporary histories of Edward the Third's wars in France, knows the pride which the knights took in shewing their courage in the continual *chevachies*, or little excursions, into the enemy's country.

94.—*faire.* I have substituted this reading from other MSS., in place of *wel cowde he*, given by the Harl. MS., which appears to be a mere blundering repetition.

And carf byforn his fadur at the table.
A YEMAN had he, and servantes nomoo
At that tyme, for him lust ryde soo;
And he was clad in coote and hood of grene.
A shef of pocok arwes bright and kene
Under his belte he bar full thriftily.
Wel cowde he dresse his takel yomanly:
His arwes drowpud nought with fetheres lowe.
And in his hond he bar a mighty bowe.
A not-heed hadde he, with a broun visage.
Of woode-craft cowde he wel al the usage.
Upon his arme he bar a gay bracer,
And by his side a swerd and a bokeler,
And on that other side a gay daggere,
Harneysed wel, and scharp as poynt of spere:
A Cristofre on his brest of silver schene.
An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene;
A forster was he sothely, as I gesse.
Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
That of hire smylyng was ful symple and coy;
Hire grettest ooth nas but by seynt Loy;
And sche was clept madame Englentyne.

104.—*pocok arwes.* Arrows fledged with peacock's feathers. They appear to have been larger than the common arrows. In a compotus of the Bishop of Winchester, in 1471 (cited by Warton, Hist. E. P. ii. p. 211), we have one head:—"*Sagittæ magnæ. Et de cxliv. sagittis magnis barbatis cum pennis pavonum.*"

115.—*A Cristofre.* A figure of St. Christopher used as a brooch. On the use of these brooches, or signs, see an interesting paper, by Mr. C. Roach Smith, in the Journal of the British Archæological Association, vol. i. p. 200. The figure of St. Christopher was looked upon with particular reverence among the middle and lower classes; and was supposed to possess the power of shielding the person who looked on it from hidden dangers.

Ful wel sche sang the servise devyne,
Entuned in hire nose ful semyly;
And Frensch sche spak ful faire and fetysly,
Aftur the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
For Frensch of Parys was to hire unknowe.
At mete wel i-taught was sche withalle;
Sche leet no morsel from hire lippès falle,
Ne wette hire fyngres in hire sauce deepe.
Wel cowde sche carie a morsel, and wel keepe,
That no drope fil uppon hire brest.
In curtesie was sett al hire lest.
Hire overlippe wypud sche so clene,
That in hire cuppe was no ferthing sene
Of grees, whan sche dronken hadde hire draught.
Ful semely aftur hire mete sche raught.
And sikurly sche was of gret disport,
And ful plesant, and amyable of port,
And peyned hire to counterfete cheere
Of court, and ben estatlich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But for to speken of hire conscience,
Sche was so charitable and so pitous,

120.—*St. Loy.* Probably a corruption of St. Eloy, or St. Eligius. It is the reading of all the MSS., and Tyrwhitt ought not to have changed it. The same oath occurs in the Freres Tale, l. 7143.

124.—*Frensch.* The French taught in England was the debased form of the old Anglo-Norman, somewhat similar to that used at a later period in the courts of law; and it was this at which Chaucer, and some of his contemporaries, sneered. The writer of the Visions of Piers Ploughman speaks of French of Norfolk, l. 2949.

127.—*At mete.* These remarks agree, almost literally, with the directions contained in the different medieval tracts written for the purpose of teaching manners at table.

Sche wolde weepe if that sche sawe a mous
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smale houndes hadde sche, that sche fedde
With rostud fleissh and mylk and wastel breed.
But sore wepte sche if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smot it with a yerde smerte:
And al was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semely hire wymple i-pynched was;
Hire nose streight; hire eyen grey as glas;
Hire mouth ful smal, and therto softe and reed;
But sikurly sche hadde a fair forheed.
It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe;
For hardily sche was not undurgrowe.
Ful fetys was hire cloke, as I was waar.
Of smal coral aboute hire arme sche baar
A peire of bedes gaudid al with grene;
And theron heng a broch of gold ful schene,

149.—*men smot.* The word *men*, used in this phrase, appears here construed with a singular verb, as though it had been *man* (*on frappa*). So again below, l. 169, *men might.* So in a poem in my Political Songs, p. 330, "Where *shal men* nu finde."

152.—*eyen grey.* This appears to have been the favourite colour of ladies' eyes in the time of Chaucer. The young girl, in the Reves Tale, is described—

"With camoys nose, and eyghen gray as glas."

160.—*a broch.* In 1845 a brooch, of the form of an A, represented in the accompanying cut, was found in a field in Dorsetshire. It appears to be of the fourteenth century, and affords a curious illustration of this passage of Chaucer. The inscription on one side seems to be,—

"IO FAS AMER E DOZ DE AMER."

On which was first i-writen a crowned A,
And after that, *Amor vincit omnia.*
Anothur NONNE also with hire hadde sche,
That was hire chapelleyn, and PRESTES thre.
A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrie,
An out-rydere, that loved venerye;
A manly man, to ben an abbot able.
Ful many a deynté hors hadde he in stable:
And whan he rood, men might his bridel heere
Gyngle in a whistlyng wynd so cleere,
And eek as lowde as doth the chapel belle,
Ther as the lord was keper of the selle.
The reule of seynt Maure or of seint Beneyt,
Bycause that it was old and somdel streyt,
This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace,

166.—*loved venerye.* The monks of the middle ages were extremely attached to hunting and field-sports, and this was a frequent subject of complaint with the more austere ecclesiastics, and of satire with the laity.

170.—*gyngle.* It was a universal practice among riders who wished to be thought fashionable, to have their horses' bridles hung with bells. The Templars were blamed for this vanity, in the thirteenth century. In the romance of Richard Cœur de Lion, the sultan of Damas has a trusty mare, of which we are told,—

"Hys crouper heeng al ful of belles,
And his peytrel, and his arsoun,
Three myle myghte men hear the sown."

Wycliffe, in his Triloge, inveighs against the priests of his time for their "fair hors, and joly and gay sadeles, and bridles ringing by the way." At a much later period, Spencer describes a lady's steed,—

"Her wanton palfrey all was overspread
With tinsel trappings, woven like a wave,
Whose bridle rung with golden bells and bosses brave."

173.—*The reule.* The rules of St. Maure and St. Benet were the oldest forms of monastic discipline in the Romish church.

175.—*olde thinges.* This is the reading of most of the MSS., and I have adopted it instead of that of the MS. Harl., *forby hem*, which appears to give no clear sense.

And helde aftur the newe world the space.
He gaf nat of that text a pulled hen,
That seith, that hunters been noon holy men;
Ne that a monk, whan he is cloysterles,
Is likned to a fissche that is watirles;
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloystre.
But thilke text hild he not worth an oystre.
And I seide his opinioun was good.
What schulde he studie, and make himselven wood,
Uppon a book in cloystre alway to powre,
Or swynke with his handes, and laboure,
As Austyn byt? How schal the world be served?
Lat Austyn have his swynk to him reserved.
Therfore he was a pricasour aright:
Greyhoundes he hadde as swifte as fowel in flight:
Of prikyng and of huntyng for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I saugh his sleves purfiled atte hond
With grys, and that the fynest of a lond.
And for to festne his hood undur his chyn
He hadde of gold y-wrought a curious pyn:
A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was ballid, and schon as eny glas,
And eek his face, as he hadde be anoynt.
He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt.

179.—*cloysterles.* This is also the reading of a Cambridge MS. The passage is a literal translation of one from the Decretal of Gratian, as cited by Tyrwhitt,—"*Sicut piscis sine aqua caret vita, ita sine monasterio monachus.*" The other readings, *rekkeles*, *recheles*, &c., found in most of the MSS., present considerable difficulties; and Tyrwhitt's explanation seems hardly admissible.

His eyen steep, and rollyng in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed.
His bootes souple, his hors in gret estat,
Now certeinly he was a fair prelat.
He was not pale as a for-pyned goost.
A fat swan loved he best of eny roost.
His palfray was as broun as eny berye.
A FRERE ther was, a wantoun and a merye,
A lymytour, a ful solempne man.
In alle the ordres foure is noon that can
So moche of daliaunce and fair langage.
He hadde i-made many a fair mariage
Of yonge wymmen, at his owne cost.
Unto his ordre he was a noble post.
Ful wel biloved, and famulier was he,
With frankeleyns over al in his cuntré,
And eek with worthi wommen of the toun:
For he hadde power of confessioun,
As seyde himself, more than a curat,
For of his ordre he was licenciat.
Ful sweetly herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun;
He was an esy man to geve penance,
Ther as he wiste to han a good pitance:
For unto a povre ordre for to geve

203.—*souple.* "This is part of the description of a smart abbot, by an anonymous writer of the thirteenth century:—'*Ocreas habebat in cruribus, quasi innatæ essent, sine plica porrectas.*'—MS. Bodl., James, n. 6. p. 121."—*Tyrwhitt.*

Is signe that a man is wel i-schreve.
For if he gaf, he dorste make avaunt,
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.
For many a man so hard is of his herte,
He may not wepe though him sore smerte.
Therfore in stede of wepyng and prayeres,
Men mooten given silver to the pore freres.
His typet was ay farsud ful of knyfes
And pynnes, for to give faire wyfes.
And certayn he hadde a mery noote.
Wel couthe he synge and pleye on a rote.
Of yeddynges he bar utturly the prys.
His nekke whit was as the flour-de-lys.
Therto he strong was as a champioun,
He knew wel the tavernes in every toun,
And every ostiller or gay tapstere,
Bet than a lazer, or a beggere,
For unto such a worthi man as he
Acorded not, as by his faculté,
To have with sike lazars aqueyntaunce.
It is not honest, it may not avaunce,
For to delen with such poraile,
But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.
And over al, ther eny profyt schulde arise,
Curteys he was, and lowe of servyse.
Ther was no man nowher so vertuous.
He was the beste begger in al his hous :

237.—*yeddynges.* MS. C. 2, reads *weddinges.*

[And gave a certaine ferme for the grant,
Non of his bretheren came in his haunt].
For though a widewe hadde but oo schoo,
So plesaunt was his *In principio*,
Yet wolde he have a ferthing or he wente.
His purchace was bettur than his rente.
And rage he couthe and pleye as a whelpe,
In love-dayes ther couthe he mochil helpe.
For ther was he not like a cloysterer,
With a thredbare cope, as a pore scoler,
But he was like a maister or a pope.
Of double worstede was his semy-cope,
That rounded was as a belle out of presse.
Somwhat he lipsede, for wantounesse,
To make his Englissch swete upon his tunge;
And in his harpyng, whan that he hadde sunge,
His eyghen twynkeled in his heed aright,
As don the sterres in the frosty night.
This worthi lymytour was called Huberd.
A MARCHAUNT was ther with a forked berd,

253, 254.—These two lines are wanting in all the MSS. I have consulted, a circumstance of which Tyrwhitt takes no notice, though they are an evident interpolation. He seems to have taken them from the old printed editions.

258.—*purchace.* This sentiment, or proverb, is taken literally from a line in the Romance of the Rose,—

"Mieux vault mon pourchas que ma rente."

272.—*forked berd.* In Shottesbrooke church, Berks, there is a brass of a Franklin, of the time of Edward III, in which he is represented with a forked beard, as in the accompanying cut, which seems to have been the fashionable mode of dressing the beard among the bourgeoisie. The Anglo-Saxons wore forked beards.

In motteleye, and high on horse he sat,
Uppon his heed a Flaundrisch bever hat.
His botus clapsud faire and fetously.
His resons he spak ful solempnely,
Sownynge alway the encres of his wynnyng.
He wolde the see were kepud for eny thing
Betwixe Middulburgh and Orewelle.
Wel couthe he in eschange scheeldes selle.
This worthi man ful wel his witte bisette;
Ther wiste no man that he was in dette,
So estately was he of governaunce,
With his bargayns, and with his chevysaunce.
For sothe he was a worthi man withalle,
But soth to say, I not what men him calle.
A Clerk ther was of Oxenford also,
That unto logik hadde longe i-go.
Al so lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he was not right fat, I undertake;
But lokede holwe, and therto soburly.
Ful thredbare was his overest courtepy,
For he hadde nought geten him yit a benefice,
Ne was not worthy to haven an office.
For him was lever have at his beddes heed
Twenty bookes, clothed in blak and reed,
Of Aristotil, and of his philosophie,
Then robus riche, or fithul, or sawtrie.
But al though he were a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litul gold in cofre,
But al that he might of his frendes hente,

On bookes and his lernyng he it spente,
And busily gan for the soules pray
Of hem that gaf him wherwith to scolay.
Of studie tooke he most cure and heede.
Not oo word spak he more than was neede;
Al that he spak it was of heye prudence,
And schort and quyk, and ful of gret sentence.
Sownynge in moral manere was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

A SERGEANT OF LAWE, war and wys,
That often hadde ben atte parvys,
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discret he was, and of gret reverence:
He semed such, his wordes were so wise,
Justice he was ful often in assise,
By patent, and by pleyn commissioun;
For his science, and for his heih renoun,
Of fees and robes had he many oon.
So gret a purchasour was ther nowher noon.
Al was fee symple to him in effecte,

301.—*might of his frendes hente.*—This is the reading of most of the MSS., and appears to be the right one. The MS. Harl. reads, *might gete and his frendes sende.*

304.—*gaf him.* An allusion to the common practice, at this period, of poor scholars in the universities, who wandered about the country, begging, to raise money to support them in their studies. See Piers Ploughman, l. 4525, and note.

312.—*parvys.* This is generally explained as a portico before a church. The *parvis* at London, supposed to be that of St. Paul's, was anciently frequented by sergeants-at-law, as we learn from Fortescue, de Laud. leg. Angl. c. 51,—"*Post meridiem curiæ non tenentur; sed placitantes tunc se divertunt ad pervisum et alibi, consulentes cum servientibus ad legem, et aliis consiliariis suis.*" See also Warton's Hist. of Eng. Poetry, edit. of 1840, vol. ii. p. 212.

His purchasyng might nought ben to him suspecte.
Nowher so besy a man as he ther nas,
And yit he semed besier than he was.
In termes hadde caas and domes alle,
That fro the tyme of kyng Will. were falle.
Therto he couthe endite, and make a thing,
Ther couthe no man pynche at his writyng.
And every statute couthe he pleyn by roote.
He rood but hoomly in a medled coote,
Gird with a seynt of silk, with barres smale;
Of his array telle I no lenger tale.
A FRANKELEYN ther was in his companye;
Whit was his berde, as the dayesye.
Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.
Wel loved he in the morn a sop of wyn.
To lyve in delite was al his wone,
For he was Epicurius owne sone,
That heeld opynyoun that pleyn delyt
Was verraily felicité perfyt.
An househaldere, and that a gret, was he;
Seynt Julian he was in his countré.
His breed, his ale, was alway after oon;
A bettre envyned man was nowher noon.
Withoute bake mete was never his hous,
Of fleissch and fissch, and that so plentyvous,
It snewed in his hous of mete and drynk,
Of alle deyntees that men cowde thynke,
Aftur the sondry sesouns of the yeer,

312. St. Julian was the patron of hospitality.

He chaunged hem at mete and at soper.
Ful many a fat partrich had he in mewe,
And many a brem and many a luce in stewe.
Woo was his cook, but if his sauce were
Poynant and scharp, and redy al his gere,
His table dormant in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessions ther was he lord and sire.
Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the schire.
An anlas and a gipser al of silk
Heng at his gerdul, whit as morne mylk.
A schirreve hadde he ben, and a counter;
Was nowher such a worthi vavaser.
An HABURDASSHER and a CARPENTER,
A WEBBE, a DEYER, and a TAPICER,
Weren with us eeke, clothed in oo lyveré,
Of a solempne and gret fraternité.
Ful freissh and newe here gere piked was;
Here knyfes were i-chapud nat with bras,
But al with silver wrought ful clene and wel,
Here gurdles and here pouches every del.
Wel semed eche of hem a fair burgeys,
To sitten in a geldehalle, on the deys.
Every man for the wisdom that he can,
Was schaply for to ben an aldurman.

352.—*in stewe*; i. e., in a fish-pond. The great consumption of fish under the Romish regime rendered a fish-pond a necessary accessory to every gentleman's house.

355.—*table dormant.* Probably the fixed table at the end of the hall.

For catel hadde they inough and rente,
And eek here wyfes wolde it wel assente:
And elles certeyn hadde thei ben to blame.
It is right fair for to be clept *madame*,
And for to go to vigilies al byfore,
And han a mantel rially i-bore.
A Cook thei hadde with hem for the nones,
To boyle chiknes and the mary bones,
And poudre marchant, tart, and galyngale.
Wel cowde he knowe a draught of Londone ale.
He cowde roste, sethe, broille, and frie,
Make mortreux, and wel bake a pye.
But gret harm was it, as it semede me,
That on his schyne a mormal hadde he;
For blankmanger he made with the beste.
A Schipman was ther, wonyng fer by weste:
For ought I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.
He rood upon a rouncy, as he couthe,
In a gowne of faldyng to the kne.
A dagger hangyng on a laas hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hoote somer had maad his hew al broun;
And certeinly he was a good felawe.
Ful many a draught of wyn had he drawe

384.—*London ale.* Tyrwhitt has cited a passage of an old writer, which shews that London ale was prized above that of other parts of the country.

396.—*the hoote somer.* Perhaps this is a reference to the summer of the year 1351, which was long remembered as the dry and hot summer. Other allusions in this general prologue seem to shew that Chaucer intended to lay the plot of his Canterbury pilgrimage soon after this date.

From Burdeux-ward, whil that the chapman sleep.
Of nyce conscience took he no keep.
If that he foughte, and hadde the heigher hand,
By water he sente hem hoom to every land.
But of his craft to rikne wel the tydes,
His stremes and his dangers him bisides,
His herbergh and his mone, his lodemenage,
Ther was non such from Hulle to Cartage.
Hardy he was, and wys to undertake:
With many a tempest hadde his berd ben schake.
He knew wel alle the havenes, as thei were,
From Scotlond to the cape of Fynestere,
And every cryk in Bretayne and in Spayne:
His barge y-clepud was the Magdelayne.
Ther was also a Doctour of Phisik,
In al this world ne was ther non him lyk
To speke of phisik and of surgerye:
For he was groundud in astronomye.
He kepte his pacient a ful gret del
In houres by his magik naturel.
Wel cowde he fortune the ascendent
Of his ymages for his pacient.
He knew the cause of every maladye,
Were it of cold, or hete, or moyst, or drye,

410.—*Scotland.* Most of the MSS. have *Gotland*, the reading adopted by Tyrwhitt, and perhaps the correct one.

416.—*Astronomye.* A great portion of the medical science of the middle ages depended on astrological and other superstitious observances.

417.—*a ful gret del.* This is the reading of most of the MSS.; the MS. Harl. has *wondurly wel.*

And where thei engendrid, and of what humour;
He was a verrey parfight practisour.
The cause i-knowe, and of his harm the roote,
Anon he gaf the syke man his boote.
Ful redy hadde he his apotecaries,
To sende him dragges, and his letuaries,
For eche of hem made othur for to wynne:
Here friendschipe nas not newe to begynne.
Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,
And Deiscorides, and eeke Rufus;
Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;
Serapyon, Razis, and Avycen;
Averrois, Damascen, and Constantyn;
Bernard, and Gatisden, and Gilbertyn.
Of his diete mesurable was he,
For it was of no superfluité,
But of gret norisching and digestible.
His studie was but litel on the Bible.

431.—*Wel knew he.* The authors mentioned here were the chief medical text-books of the middle ages. Rufus was a Greek physician, of Ephesus, of the age of Trajan; Haly, Serapion, and Avicen, were Arabian physicians and astronomers of the eleventh century; Rhasis was a Spanish Arab, of the tenth century; and Averroes was a Moorish scholar, who flourished in Morocco in the twelfth century; Johannes Damascenus was also an Arabian physician, but of a much earlier date; Constantius Afer, a native of Carthage, and afterwards a monk of Monte Cassino, was one of the founders of the school of Salerno,—he lived at the end of the eleventh century; Bernardus Gordonius, professor of medicine at Montpellier, appears to have been Chaucer's contemporary; John Gatisden was a distinguished physician of Oxford, in the earlier half of the fourteenth century; Gilbertyn is supposed by Warton to be the celebrated Gilbertus Anglicus. The other names mentioned here are too well known to need further observation. The names of Hippocrates and Galen were, in the middle ages, always (or nearly always) spelt *Ypocras* and *Galienus*.

In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,
Lyned with taffata, and with sendal.
And yit he was but esy in dispence:
He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial;
Therfore he lovede gold in special.
A good WIF was ther OF byside BATHE,
But sche was somdel deef, and that was skathe.
Of cloth-makyng sche hadde such an haunt,
Sche passed hem of Ypris and of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon,
That to the offryng byforn hire schulde goon,
And if ther dide, certeyn so wroth was sche,
That sche was thanne out of alle charité.
Hire keverchefs weren ful fyne of grounde;
I durste swere, they weyghede ten pounde,
That on the Sonday were upon hire heed.
Hire hosen were of fyn scarlett reed,
Ful streyte y-teyed, and schoos ful moyste and newe.

444.—*pestilence.* An allusion, probably, to the great pestilences which devastated Europe in the middle of the fourteenth century, and to which we owe the two celebrated works, the Decameron of Boccacio, and the Visions of Piers Ploughman.

449.—*cloth makyng.* The west of England, and especially the neighbourhood of Bath, from which the "good wif" came, was celebrated, till a comparatively recent period, as the district of cloth-making. Ipres and Ghent were the great clothing marts on the Continent

456.—*ten pounde,* This is the reading of all the best MSS. I have consulted. Tyrwhitt has *a pound.* It is a satire on the fashionable head dresses of the ladies at this time, which appear in the illuminations to be composed of large quantities of heavy wadding, and the satirist takes the liberty of exaggerating a little.

459.—*moyste.* One of the Cambridge MSS. reads *softe*, which was, perhaps, originally a gloss to *moyste.*

Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
Sche was a worthy womman al hire lyfe,
Housbondes atte chirche dore hadde sche fyfe,
Withouten othur companye in youthe.
But therof needeth nought to speke as nouthe.
And thries hadde sche ben at Jerusalem;
Sche hadde passud many a straunge streem;
At Rome sche hadde ben, and at Boloyne,
In Galice at seynt Jame, and at Coloyne.
Sche cowde moche of wandryng by the weye.
Gattothud was sche, sothly for to seye.
Uppon an amblere esely sche sat,
Wymplid ful wel, and on hire heed an hat
As brood as is a bocler, or a targe;
A foot-mantel aboute hire hupes large,
And on hire feet a paire of spores scharpe.
In felawschipe wel cowde lawghe and carpe.
Of remedyes of love sche knew parchaunce,
For of that art sche knew the olde daunce.
A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a pore PERSOUN of a toun:

462.—*atte chirche dore.* The priest formerly joined the hands of the couple, and performed a great part of the marriage service, in the church porch. See Warton's History of English Poetry, ii. 201 (ed. of 1840).

468.—*Coloyne.* At Cologne the bones of the three kings of the East were believed to be preserved.

477.—*remedyes.* An allusion to the title and subject of Ovid's book, *De Remedio Amoris.*

480. Chaucer, in his beautiful character of the parson, sets up the industrious secular clergy against the lazy, wicked monks.

But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel truly wolde preche.
His parischens devoutly wold he teche.
Benigne he was, and wondur diligent,
And in adversité ful pacient:
And such he was i-proved ofte sithes.
Ful loth were him to curse for his tythes;
But rather wolde he geven out of dowte,
Unto his pore parisschens aboute,
Of his offrynge, and eek of his substaunce.
He cowde in litel thing han suffisance.
Wyd was his parisch, and houses fer asondur,
But he ne lafte not for reyn ne thondur,
In siknesse ne in meschief to visite
The ferrest in his parissche, moche and lite,
Uppon his feet, and in his hond a staf.
This noble ensample unto his scheep he gaf,
That ferst he wroughte, and after that he taughte
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte,
And this figure he addid yit therto,
That if gold ruste, what schulde yren doo?
For if a prest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wondur is a lewid man to ruste:
And schame it is, if that a prest take kepe,
A schiten schepperd and a clene schepe;

483.—*truly*. I have substituted this word, which is found in most of the other MSS., for *gladly*, the reading of the MS. Harl..

Wel oughte a prest ensample for to give,
By his clennesse, how that his scheep schulde lyve.
He sette not his benefice to huyre,
And lefte his scheep encombred in the myre,
And ran to Londone, unto seynte Poules,
To seeken him a chaunterie for soules,
Or with a brethurhede be withholde:
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it not myscarye.
He was a schepperde and no mercenarie;
And though he holy were, and vertuous,
He was to senful man nought dispitous,
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
But in his teching discret and benigne.
To drawe folk to heven by fairnesse,
By good ensample, was his busynesse:
But it were eny persone obstinat,
What so he were of high or lowe estat,
Him wolde he snybbe scharply for the nones.
A bettre preest I trowe ther nowher non is.
He waytud after no pompe ne reverence,
Ne maked him a spiced conscience,
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taught, and ferst he folwed it himselve.

With him ther was a PLOUGHMAN, his brothur,
That hadde i-lad of dong ful many a fothur.

521.—*fairnesse*. This is the reading of most of the MSS. The MS. Harl. has *clennesse*, which seems not to give so good a sense.

A trewe swynker, and a good was hee,
Lyvynge in pees, and parfight charitee.
God loved he best with al his trewe herte
At alle tymes, though him gained or smerte,
And thanne his neighebour right as himselve.
He wolde threisshe, and therto dyke, and delve,
For Cristes sake, with every pore wight,
Withouten huyre, if it laye in his might.
His tythes payede he ful faire and wel,
Bathe of his owne swynk, and his catel.
In a tabbard he rood upon a mere.
Ther was also a reeve and a mellere,
A sompnour and a pardoner also,
A maunciple, and my self, ther was no mo.
The MELLERE was a stout carl for the nones,
Ful big he was of braun, and eek of boones;
That prevede wel, for over al ther he cam,
At wrastlynge he wolde bere awey the ram.
He was schort schuldred, broode, a thikke knarre,
Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,
Or breke it with a rennyng with his heed.
His berd as ony sowe or fox was reed,
And therto brood, as though it were a spade.

550.—the ram. "This was the usual prize at wrestling-matches. See below, ver. 13,671; and Gamelyn, ver. 343 and *555*. M. Paris mentions a wrestling-match at Westminster, in the year 1222, at which a ram was the prize."—*Tyrwhitt.*

552.—harre. This is the reading of all the oldest and best MSS.; *barre*, a later reading, adopted by Tyrwhitt, appears to have originated with some one who did not know the meaning of the other word.

Upon the cop right of his nose he hade
A werte, and theron stood a tuft of heres,
Reede as the berstles of a souwes eeres.
His nose-thurles blake were and wyde.
A swerd and a bocler baar he by his side.
His mouth as wyde was as a gret forneys.
He was a jangler, and a golyardeys,
And that was most of synne and harlotries.
Wel cowde he stele corn, and tollen thries;
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold pardé.
A whight cote and blewe hood wered he.
A baggepipe cowde he blowe and sowne,
And therwithal he brought us out of towne.
A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple,
Of which achatours mighten take exemple
For to be wys in beyyng of vitaille.
For whethur that he payde, or took by taille,
Algate he wayted so in his acate,
That he was ay biforn and in good state.

564.—*stele corn.* During the middle ages, millers enjoyed, above all other tradesmen, the reputation of being thieves; and their depredations were the more generally felt, as people in all classes of society carried their own corn to the mill to be ground, often in very small quantities.

565.—*a thombe of gold.* "If the allusion be, as is most probable, to the old proverb,—*every honest miller has a thumb of gold*, this passage may mean, that our miller, notwithstanding his thefts, was *an honest miller*,—i. e., as honest as his brethren."—*Tyrwhitt.*

567.—*a baggepipe.* The bagpipe was a very popular instrument of music in the middle ages, and figures in the illuminated manuscripts of various countries. In modern times its use has been restricted to Scotland (probably because minstrelsy was longer preserved there) until it was looked upon as the national music.

Now is not that of God a ful fair grace,
That such a lewed mannes wit schal pace
The wisdom of an heep of lernede men?
Of maystres hadde moo than thries ten,
That were of lawe expert and curious:
Of which ther were a doseyn in an hous,
Worthi to be stiwardes of rente and lond
Of any lord that is in Engelond,
To make him lyve by his propre good,
In honour detteles, but if he were wood,
Or lyve as scarsly as he can desire;
And able for to helpen al a schire
In many caas that mighte falle or happe;
And yit this maunciple sette here aller cappe.
The Reeve was a sklendre colerik man,
His berd was schave as neigh as ever he can.
His heer was by his eres rounde i-schorn.
His top was dockud lyk a preest biforn.
Ful longe wern his leggus, and ful lene,
Al like a staff, ther was no calf y-sene.
Wel cowde he kepe a gerner and a bynne:
Ther was non auditour cowde on him wynne.
Wel wiste he by the drought, and by the reyn,
The yeeldyng of his seed, and of his greyn.
His lordes scheep, his meet, and his dayerie,

588.—*sette here aller cappe;* i. e., outwitted them all. Conf. v. 3145.
591.—*rounde.* The MS. Harl. has *neighe*, but all the other MSS. I have consulted agree in the reading I have adopted in the text. This description is illustrated by the cut given on p. 13.

His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrie,
Was holly in this reeves governynge,
And by his covenaunt gaf the rekenynge,
Syn that his lord was twenti yeer of age;
Ther couthe noman bringe him in arrerage.
Ther nas ballif, ne herde, ne other hyne,
That they ne knewe his sleight and his covyne:
They were adrad of him, as of the deth.
His wonyng was ful fair upon an heth,
With grene trees i-schadewed was his place.
He cowde bettre than his lord purchace.
Ful riche he was i-stored prively,
His lord wel couthe he plese subtilly,
To geve and lene him of his owne good,
And have a thank, a cote, and eek an hood.
In youthe he lerned hadde a good mester:
He was a wel good wright, a carpenter.
This reeve sat upon a wel good stot,
That was a pomely gray, and highte Scot.
A long surcote of pers uppon he hadde,
And by his side he bar a rusty bladde.
Of Northfolk was this reeve of which I telle,
Byside a toun men callen Baldeswelle.
Tukkud he was, as is a frere, aboute,
And ever he rood the hynderest of the route.
A Sompnour was ther with us in that place,

619.—*pers*. The MS. Harl. alone reads *blew*; *perse* was a sky-blue colour.

622.—*Baldeswelle*. A parish in Eynford hundred, Norfolk.

That hadde a fyr-reed cherubyns face,
For sawceflem he was, with eyghen narwe.
As hoot he was, and leccherous, as a sparwe,
With skalled browes blak, and piled berd:
Of his visage children weren sore aferd.
Ther nas quyksilver, litarge, ne brimstone,
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,
Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
That him might helpen of his whelkes white,
Ne of the knobbes sittyng on his cheekes,
Wel loved he garleek, oynouns, and ek leekes,
And for to drinke strong wyn reed as blood.
Thanne wolde he speke, and crye as he were wood.
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
A fewe termes hadde he, tuo or thre,
That he hadde lerned out of som decree;
No wondur is, he herde it al the day,
And eek ye knowe wel, how that a jay
Can clepe Watte, as wel as can the pope.
But who so wolde in othur thing him grope,
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie,
Ay, *Questio quid juris*, wolde he crye.

626.—*cherubyns face.* H. Stephens, Apol. Herod., i. 30, quotes the same thought from a French epigram,—

"Nos grands docteurs *du cherubin visage*."

648.—*Questio quid juris.* "This kind of question occurs frequently in Ralph de Hengham. After having stated a case, he adds, *quid juris?* and then proceeds to give the answer to it. See Heng. Mag., c. xi. Esto autem quod reus nullo modo venerit ad hunc diem, *quid juris?* &c. See also c. xii."—*Tyrwhitt.*

He was a gentil harlot and a kynde;
A bettre felaw schulde men nowher fynde.
He wolde suffre for a quart of wyn,
A good felawe to han his concubyn
A twelve moneth, and excuse him atte fulle.
And prively a fynch eek cowde he pulle.
And if he fond owher a good felawe,
He wolde teche him to have non awe
In such a caas of the archedeknes curs;
But if a mannes soule were in his purs;
For in his purs he scholde punyssched be.
"Purs is the ercedeknes helle," quod he.
But wel I woot he lyeth right in dede:
Of cursyng oweth ech gulty man to drede.
For curs wol slee right as assoillyng saveth,
And also ware him of a *significavit*.
In daunger he hadde at his owne assise
The yonge gurles of the diocise,
And knew here counseil, and was al here red.
A garland had he set upon his heed,
As gret as it were for an ale-stake:

649.—*harlot*. Chaucer gives us here an excellent picture of the class of society to which this name was applied in the middle ages. See the glossary.

664.—*significavit*. "The writ *de excommunicato capiendo*, commonly called a *significavit*, from the beginning of the writ, which is as follows: *Rex vicecomiti L. salutem*. Significavit *nobis venerabilis pater H. L., episcopus*, &c. Cod. Jur. Ecc., p. 1054."—*Tyrwhitt*.

665.—*in daunger*. The old meaning of the word *danger* was jurisdiction, or dominion whereby persons were liable to fine for certain offences to him in whose *danger* they were. Most of the MSS. have *gise* instead of *assise*.

A bokeler had he maad him of a cake.
With him ther rood a gentil PARDONER
Of Rouncival, his frend and his comper,
That streyt was comen from the court ef Rome.
Ful lowde he sang, Come hider, love, to me.
This sompnour bar to him a stif burdoun,
Was nevere trompe of half so gret a soun.
This pardoner hadde heer as yelwe as wex,
But smothe it heng, as doth a strike of flex:
By unces hynge his lokkes that he hadde,
And therwith he his schuldres overspradde.
Ful thenne it lay, by culpons on and oon,
But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon,
For it was trussud up in his walet.
Him thought he rood al of the newe get,
Dischevele, sauf his cappe, he rood al bare.
Suche glaryng eyghen hadde he, as an hare.
A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe.
His walet lay byforn him in his lappe,
Bret ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.
A voys he hadde, as smale as eny goot.
No berd ne hadde he, ne never scholde have,

674.—*Cume hider, love, to me.* Probably the burden of a popular song.

675.—*bar ... a stif burdoun.* "Sang the bass. See ver. 4163, and Ducange in v. *Burdo*."—*Tyrwhitt.*

684.—*newe get.* New fashion. Tyrwhitt has illustrated this phrase by a passage from Occleve's poem, *De regimine principis*,—

"Also ther is another *newe gette*,
Al foule waste of cloth and excessif."

As smothe it was as it ware late i-schave;
I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare.
But of his craft, fro Berwyk unto Ware,
Ne was ther such another pardoner.
For in his male he hadde a pilwebeer,
Which, that he saide, was oure lady veyl:
He seide, he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That seynt Petur hadde, whan that he wente
Uppon the see, till Jhesu Crist him hente.
He hadde a cros of latoun ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
But with thise reliques, whanne that he fand
A pore persoun dwellyng uppon land,
Upon a day he gat him more moneye
Than that the persoun gat in monthes tweye.
And thus with feyned flaterie and japes,
He made the persoun, and the poeple, his apes.
But trewely to tellen atte laste,
He was in churche a noble ecclesiaste.
Wel cowde he rede a lessoun or a storye,
But altherbest he sang an offertorie:
For wel wyst he, whan that song was songe,
He moste preche, and wel affyle his tunge,
To wynne silver, as he right wel cowde:
Therfore he sang ful meriely and lowde.
Now have I told you schortly in a clause,
Thestat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the cause
Why that assembled was this companye
In Southwerk at this gentil ostelrie,

That highte the Tabbard, faste by the Belle.
But now is tyme to yow for to telle
How that we bare us in that ilke night,
Whan we were in that ostelrie alight;
And aftur wol I telle of oure viage,
And al the remenaunt of oure pilgrimage.
But ferst I pray you of your curtesie,
That ye ne rette it nat my vilanye,
Though that I speke al pleyn in this matere,
To telle you here wordes and here cheere;
Ne though I speke here wordes propurly.
For this ye knowen al so wel as I,
Who so schal telle a tale aftur a man,
He moste reherce, as neigh as ever he can,
Every word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudely ne large;
Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe,
Or feyne thing, or fynde wordes newe.
He may not spare, though he were his brothur;
He moste as wel sey oo word, as anothur.
Crist spak himself ful broode in holy writ,
And wel ye woot no vilanye is it.
Eke Plato seith, who so that can him rede,
The wordes mot be cosyn to the dede.
Also I pray you to forgeve it me,

721.—*the Belle.* Stowe mentions an inn named the *Bull* as being near the Tabard, but I have found no mention of the Bell

743.—*Plato.* Tyrwhitt thinks that Chaucer took this saying of Plato from Boethius, iii, *pr.* 12.

Al have I folk nat set in here degré
Here in this tale, as that thei schulde stonde:
My witt is schorte, ye may wel undurstonde.
Greet cheere made oure ost us everichon,
And to the souper sette he us anon:
And served us with vitaille atte beste.
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drynke us leste.
A semely man oure ooste was withalle
For to han been a marchal in an halle;
A large man was he with eyghen stepe,
A fairere burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:
Bold of his speche, and wys and well i-taught,
And of manhede lakkede he right naught.
Eke therto he was right a mery man,
And after soper playen he bygan,
And spak of myrthe among othur thinges,
Whan that we hadde maad oure rekenynges;
And sayde thus; "Lo, lordynges, trewely
Ye ben to me right welcome hertily:
For by my trouthe, if that I schal not lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye
At oones in this herbergh, as is now.
Fayn wold I do yow merthe, wiste I how.
And of a merthe I am right now bythought,
To doon you eese, and it schal coste nought.

748.—*schorte.* This is the reading in which the MSS. generally agree, and it seems the best; the MS. Harl. reads *thynne.*

756.—*Chepe.* Cheapside was, in the middle ages, occupied by the wealthiest and most substantial citizens of London.

Ye goon to Caunturbury; God you speede,
The blisful martir quyte you youre meede!
And wel I woot, as ye gon by the weye,
Ye schapen yow to talken and to pleye:
For trewely comfort ne merthe is noon,
To ryde by the weye domb as a stoon:
And therfore wol I make you disport,
As I seyde erst, and do you som confort.
And if yow liketh alle by oon assent
Now for to standen at my juggement:
And for to werken as I schal you seye,
To morwe, whan ye riden by the weye,
Now by my fadres soule that is deed,
But ye be merye, smyteth of myn heed.
Hold up youre hond withoute more speche."
Oure counseil was not longe for to seche:
Us thoughte it nas nat worth to make it wys,
And graunted him withoute more avys,
And bad him seie his verdite, as him leste.
"Lordynges," quoth he, "now herkeneth for the beste;
But taketh not, I pray you, in disdayn;
This is the poynt, to speken schort and playn,
That ech of yow to schorte with youre weie,
In this viage, schal telle tales tweye,
To Caunturburi-ward, I mene it so,
And hom-ward he schal tellen othur tuo,
Of aventures that ther han bifalle.
And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,
That is to seye, that telleth in this caas

Tales of best sentence and of solas,
Schal han a soper at your alther cost
Here in this place sittynge by this post,
Whan that we comen ageyn from Canturbery.
And for to make you the more mery,
I wol myselven gladly with you ryde,
Right at myn owen cost, and be youre gyde.
And who so wole my juggement withseie,
Schal paye for al we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouchesauf that it be so,
Telle me anoon, withouten wordes moo,
And I wole erely schappe me therfore."
This thing was graunted, and oure othus swore
With ful glad herte, and prayden him also,
That he wolde vouchesauf for to doon so,
And that he wolde ben oure governour,
And of oure tales jugge and reportour,
And sette a souper at a certeyn prys;
And we wolde rewled be at his devys,
In heygh and lowe: and thus by oon assent,
We been acorded to his juggement.
And therupon the wyn was fet anoon;
We dronken, and to reste wente echoon,
Withouten eny lengere taryinge.
A morwe whan that the day bigan to sprynge,
Up roos oure ost, and was oure althur cok,
And gaderud us togider alle in a flok,
And forth we riden a litel more than paas,
Unto the waterynge of seint Thomas:

And there oure ost bigan his hors areste,
And seyde; "Lordus, herkeneth if yow leste.
Ye woot youre forward, and I it you recorde.
If eve-song and morwe-song acorde,
Let se now who schal telle ferst a tale.
As evere I moote drinke wyn or ale,
Who so be rebel to my juggement,
Schal paye for al that by the weye is spent.
Now draweth cut, er that we forther twynne;
Which that hath the schortest schal bygynne."
"Sire knight," quoth he, "maister and my lord,
Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord.
Cometh ner, quoth he, my lady prioresse;
And ye, sir clerk, lat be your schamfastnesse,
Ne studieth nat; ley hand to, every man."
Anon to drawen every wight bigan,
And schortly for to tellen as it was,
Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,
The soth is this, the fil to the knight,
Of which ful glad and blithe was every wight;
And telle he moste his tale as was resoun,
By forward and by composicioun,
As ye han herd; what needeth wordes moo?
And whan this goode man seigh that it was so,
As he that wys was and obedient

828.—*waterynge of seint Thomas.* The watering of St. Thomas was at the second mile-stone on the old Canterbury road. It is mentioned not unfrequently in the early dramatists.

837.—*draweth cut.* Froissart terms this method of drawing lots *tirer à la longue paille.*

To kepe his forward by his fre assent,
He seyde; "Syn I schal bygynne the game,
What, welcome be thou cut, a Goddus name!
Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye."
And with that word we riden forth oure weye;
And he bigan with right a merie chere,
His tale, and seide right in this manere.

THE KNIGHTES TALE.

Whilom, as olde stories tellen us,
Ther was a duk that highte Theseus.
Of Athenes he was lord and governour,
And in his tyme swich a conquerour,
That gretter was ther non under the sonne.
Ful many a riche contré hadde he wonne;
That with his wisdam and his chivalrie
He conquered al the regne of Femynye,
That whilom was i-cleped Cithea;
And weddede the queen Ipolita,

860.—*right in this manere.* Tyrwhitt reads *as ye shul here*, and inserts *anon* after *tale*.

The Knightes Tale. This story is taken from the Theseida of Boccacio, which was translated also into French verse; but whether Chaucer used the Italian or the French is not certain, as I have not been able to compare Chaucer with the French, The English story differs in some parts considerably, and is very much abbreviated, from the poem of Boccacio. The extracts given in the following notes are repeated from Tyrwhitt. See Tyrwhitt's Introd. and Warton's His. of Eng. Poet.

868.—*Femynye.* A medieval name for the kingdom of the Amazons. Gower (Conf. Amant.) terms Penthesilea *queen of Feminee*. *Cithea* is of course a corruption of *Scythia*.

And brought hire hoom with him in his contré
With moche glorie and gret solempnité,
And eek hire yonge suster Emelye.
And thus with victorie and with melodye
Lete I this noble duk to Athenes ryde,
And al his ost, in armes him biside.
And certes, if it nere to long to heere,
I wolde han told yow fully the manere,
How wonnen was the regne of Femenye,
By Theseus, and by his chivalrye;
And of the grete bataille for the nones
Bytwix Athenes and the Amazones;
And how asegid was Ypolita
The faire hardy quyen of Cithea;
And of the feste that was at hire weddynge,
And of the tempest at hire hoom comynge,
But al that thing I most as now forbere.
I have, God wot, a large feeld to ere;
And wayke ben the oxen in my plough.
The remenaunt of the tale is long inough,
I wol not lette eek non of at this rowte.
Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute,
And lat see now who schal the soper wynne.
And ther I lafte, I wolde agayn begynne.
This duk, of whom I make mencioun,
Whan he was comen almost unto the toun,

886.—*tempest.* Tyrwhitt has *temple*, but I think his reasons for this reading are not sufficiently weighty to authorize a departure from the text of the MS. Harl., supported, as it is, by most of the good MSS.

In al his wele and in his moste pryde,
He was war, as he cast his eyghe aside,
Wher that ther kneled in the hye weye
A companye of ladies, tweye and tweye,
Ech after other, clad in clothes blake:
But such a cry and such a woo they make,
That in this world nys creature lyvynge,
That herde such another waymentynge.
And of that cry ne wolde they never stenten,
Til they the reynes of his bridel henten.
"What folk be ye that at myn hom comynge
Pertourben so my feste with cryenge?"
Quod Theseus, "have ye so gret envye
Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and crie?
Or who hath yow misboden, or offendid?
And telleth me if it may ben amendid;
And why that ye ben clad thus al in blak?"
The oldest lady of hem alle spak,
Whan sche had swowned with a dedly chere,
That it was routhe for to seen or heere;
And seyde; "Lord, to whom fortune hath geven
Victorie, and as a conquerour lyven,
Nought greveth us youre glorie and honour;
But we beseken mercy and socour.
Have mercy on oure woo and oure distresse.
Som drope of pitee, thurgh youre gentilnesse,
Uppon us wrecchede wommen lat thou falle.
For certus, lord, ther nys noon of us alle,
That sche nath ben a duchesse or a queene;

Now be we caytifs, as it is well seene:
Thanked be fortune, and hire false wheel,
That noon estat assureth to ben weel
And certus, lord, to abiden youre presence
Here in the temple of the goddesse Clemence
We han ben waytynge al this fourtenight:
Now helpe us, lord, syn it is in thy might.
I wrecche, which that wepe and waylle thus,
Was whilom wyf to kyng Capaneus,
That starf at Thebes, cursed be that day:
And alle we that ben in this array,
And maken alle this lamentacioun,
We leften alle oure housbondes at the toun,
Whil that the sege ther aboute lay.
And yet the olde Creon, welaway!
That lord is now of Thebes the citee,
Fulfilde of ire and of iniquité,
He for despyt, and for his tyrannye,
To do the deede bodyes vilonye,
Of alle oure lordes, which that ben i-slawe,
Hath alle the bodies on an heep y-drawe,
And wol not suffren hem by noon assent
Nother to ben y-buried nor i-brent,
But maketh houndes ete hem in despite."
And with that word, withoute more respite,
They fillen gruf, and criden pitously,
"Have on us wrecched wommen som mercy,
And lat oure sorwe synken in thyn herte."
This gentil duke doun from his courser sterte

With herte pitous, whan he herde hem speke.
Him thoughte that his herte wolde breke,
Whan he seyh hem so piteous and so maat,
That whilom weren of so gret estat.
And in his armes he hem alle up hente,
And hem conforteth in ful good entente;
And swor his oth, as he was trewe knight,
He wolde do so ferforthly his might
Upon the tyraunt Creon hem to wreke,
That all the poeple of Grece scholde speke
How Creon was of Theseus y-served,
As he that hath his deth right wel deserved.
And right anoon, withoute eny abood,
His baner he desplayeth, and forth rood
To Thebes-ward, and al his oost bysyde;
No ner Athenes wolde he go ne ryde,
Ne take his eese fully half a day,
But onward on his way that nyght he lay;
And sente anoon Ypolita the queene,
And Emelye hir yonge suster schene,
Unto the toun of Athenes to dwelle:
And forth he ryt; ther is no more to telle.
The reede statue of Mars with spere and targe
So schyneth in his white baner large,
That alle the feeldes gliteren up and doun:
And by his baner was born his pynoun
Of gold ful riche, in which ther was i-bete
The Minatour which that he slough in Crete.
Thus ryt this duk, thus ryt this conquerour,
And in his oost of chevalrie the flour,

Til that he cam to Thebes, and alighte
Fayre in a feeld wher as he thoughte to fighte.
But schortly for to speken of this thing,
With Creon, which that was of Thebes kyng,
He faught, and slough him manly as a knight
In pleyn bataille, and putte his folk to flight;
And by assaut he wan the cité aftur,
And rente doun bothe wal, and sparre, and raftur:
And to the ladies he restored agayn
The bones of here housbondes that were slayn,
To do exequies, as was tho the gyse.
But it were al to long for to devyse
The grete clamour, and the waymentynge,
Which that the ladies made at the brennynge
Of the bodyes, and the grete honour,
That Theseus the noble conquerour
Doth to the ladyes, whan they from him wente:
But schortly for to telle is myn entente.
Whan that this worthy duk, this Theseus,
Hath Creon slayn, and Thebes wonne thus,
Stille in the feelde he took al night his reste,
And dide with al the contré as him leste.
To ransake in the cas of bodyes dede
Hem for to streepe of herneys and of wede,
The pilours diden businesse and cure,
After the bataile and discomfiture.
And so byfil, that in the cas thei founde,

1007.—*cas*. So the other best MSS. Tyrwhitt has substituted *tas*, a heap.

Thurgh girt with many a grevous blody wounde,
Two yonge knightes liggyng by and by,
Bothe in oon armes clad ful richely:
Of whiche two, Arcite hight that oon,
And that othur knight hight Palamon.
Nat fully quyk, we fully deed they were,
But by here coote armure, and by here gere,
Heraudes knewe hem wel in special,
As they that weren of the blood real
Of Thebes, and of sistren tuo i-born.
Out of the chaas the pilours han hem torn,
And han hem caried softe unto the tente
Of Theseus, and ful sone he hem sente
Tathenes, for to dwellen in prisoun
Perpetuelly, he wolde no raunceoun.
And this duk whan he hadde thus i-doon,
He took his host, and hom he ryt anoon
With laurer crowned as a conquerour;
And there he lyveth in joye and in honour
Terme of his lyf; what wolle ye wordes moo?
And in a tour, in angwische and in woo,
This Palamon, and his felawe Arcite,
For evermo, ther may no gold hem quyte.
This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by day,
Till it fel oones in a morwe of May
That Emelie, that fairer was to seene
Than is the lilie on hire stalkes grene,
And fresscher than the May with floures newe;
For with the rose colour strof hire hewe,

I not which was the fyner of hem two.
Er it was day, as sche was wont to do,
Sche was arisen, and al redy dight.
For May wole have no sloggardye a night.
The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,
And maketh him out of his sleepe sterte,
And seith, "Arys, and do thin observance."
This maked Emelye han remembrance
To do honour to May, and for to ryse.
I-clothed was sche fressh for to devyse.
Hire yolwe heer was browdid in a tresse,
Byhynde hire bak, a yerde long I gesse.
And in the gardyn at the sonne upriste
Sche walketh up and doun wher as hire liste.
Sche gadereth floures, partye whyte and reede,
To make a certeyn gerland for hire heede,
And as an aungel hevenly sche song.
The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
Which of the castel was the cheef dongeoun,
(Ther as this knightes weren in prisoun,

1049.—*to do honour to May.* The early English poets are full of allusions to the popular reverence paid to the month of May, derived from the pagan ages of our forefathers. Traces of these superstitions still remain in the popular custom in different parts of the country of going a Maying on the morning of the first day of the month. Such customs are repeatedly alluded to in Chaucer.

1059.—*dongeoun.* The dongeon was the grand tower of the earlier castles, and beneath it, under ground, was the prison. As the castles were enlarged, the dongeon or keep tower, being the strongest part of the fortress, was frequently made the residence of prisoners of higher rank, who were not thrown into the subterranean vaults. Hence the modern use of the word *dungeon.*

Of which I tolde yow, and telle schal)
Was evene joynyng to the gardeyn wal,
Ther as this Emely hadde hire pleyyng.
Bright was the sonne, and cleer that morwenynge,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler
Was risen, and romed in a chambre on heigh,
In which he al the noble cité seigh,
And eek the gardeyn, ful of braunches grene,
Ther as the fresshe Emelye the scheene
Was in hire walk, and romed up and doun.
This sorweful prisoner, this Palamon,
Gooth in the chambre romyng to and fro,
And to himself compleynyng of his woo:
That he was born, ful ofte he seyd, alas!
And so byfel, by aventure or cas,
That thurgh a wyndow thikke and many a barre
Of iren greet, and squar as eny sparre,
He cast his eyen upon Emelya,
And therwithal he bleynte and cryed, a!
As that he stongen were unto the herte.
And with that crye Arcite anon up sterte,
And seyde, "Cosyn myn, what eyleth the,
That art so pale and deedly for to see?
Why crydestow? who hath the doon offence?
For Goddes love, tak al in pacience
Oure prisoun, for it may non othir be.
Fortune hath geven us this adversité.
Som wikke aspect or disposicioun

Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun,
Hath geven us this, although we hadde it sworn;
So stood the heven whan that we were born,
We moste endure it: this is the schort and pleyn."
This Palamon answered, and seyde ageyn;
"Cosyn, for sothe of this opynyoun
Thou hast a veyn ymaginacioun.
This prisoun caused me not for to crye.
But I was hurt right now thurgh myn yhe
Into myn herte, that wol my bane be.
The fairnesse of the lady that I see
Yonde in the gardyn rome to and fro,
Is cause of my cryyng and my wo.
I not whethur sche be womman or goddesse;
But Venus is it, sothly, as I gesse."
And therwithal on knees adoun he fil,
And seyde: "Venus, if it be youre wil
Yow in this gardyn thus to transfigure,
Biforn me sorwful wrecched creature,
Out of this prisoun help that we may scape.
And if so be oure destiné be schape
By eterne word to deyen in prisoun,
Of oure lynage haveth sum compassioun,
That is so lowe y-brought by tyrannye."
And with that word Arcite gan espye

1090.—*Saturne.* According to the old astrological system, this was a very unpropitious star to be born under. It may be observed, that in the present story there is a constant allusion to medieval astrology, which could not be fully illustrated without long notes.

Wher as this lady romed to and fro.
And with that sight hire beauté hurt him so,
That if that Palamon was wounded sore,
Arcite is hurt as moche as he, or more.
And with a sigh he seyde pitously:
"The freissche beauté sleeth me sodeynly
Of hir that rometh yonder in the place;
And but I have hir mercy and hir grace,
That I may see hir atte leste weye,
I nam but deed; ther nys no more to seye."
This Palamon, whan he tho wordes herde,
Dispitously he loked, and answerde:
"Whether seistow in ernest or in pley?"
"Nay," quoth Arcite, "in ernest, in good fey.
God helpe me so, me lust ful evele pleye."
This Palamon gan knytte his browes tweye:
"It nere," quod he, "to the no gret honour,
For to be fals, ne for to be traytour
To me, that am thy cosyn and thy brother
I-swore ful deepe, and ech of us to other,
That never for to deyen in the payne,
Til that deeth departe schal us twayne,

1134.—*I-swore.* It was a common practice in the middle ages for persons to take formal oaths of fraternity and friendship, and a breach of the oath was considered something worse than perjury. This incident enters into the plots of some of the medieval romances. A curious example will be found in the Romance of Athelston, Reliq. Antiq. ii, p. 85.

1135.—*deyen in the payne.* This appears to have been a proverbial expression, taken from the French. In Froissart, as cited by Tyrwhitt, Edward III is made to declare, that he would bring the war to a successful issue, or *il mourroit en la peine.*

Neyther of us in love to hynder other,
Ne in non other cas, my leeve brother;
But that thou schuldest trewly forther me
In every caas, and I schal forther the.
This was thyn othe, and myn eek certayn;
I wot right wel, thou darst it nat withsayn.
Thus art thou of my counseil out of doute.
And now thou woldest falsly ben aboute
To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
And evere schal, unto myn herte sterve.
Now certes, fals Arcite, thou schal not so.
I loved hir first, and tolde the my woo
As to my counseil, and to brother sworn
To forther me, as I have told biforn.
For which thou art i-bounden as a knight
To helpe me, if it lay in thi might,
Or elles art thou fals, I dar wel sayn."
This Arcite ful proudly spak agayn.
"Thou schalt," quoth he, "be rather fals than I.
But thou art fals, I telle the uttirly.
For *par amour* I loved hir first then thow.
What wolt thou sayn? thou wost not yit now
Whether sche be a womman or goddesse.
Thyn is affeccioun of holynesse,
And myn is love, as of a creature;
For which I tolde the myn aventure
As to my cosyn, and my brother sworn.
I pose, that thou lovedest hire biforn:

1137.—*love*. The Harl. MS. has *lande*.

Wost thou nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,
That who schal geve a lover eny lawe,
Love is a grettere lawe, by my pan,
Then may be geve to eny erthly man?
Therfore posityf lawe, and such decré,
Is broke alway for love in ech degree.
A man moot needes love maugré his heed.
He may nought fle it, though he schulde be deed,
Al be sche mayde, or be sche widewe or wyf.
And that it is nat likly al thy lyf
To stonden in hire grace, no more schal I:
For wel thou wost thyselven verrily,
That thou and I been dampned to prisoun
Perpetuelly, us gayneth no raunsoun.
We stryve, as doth the houndes for the boon,
They foughte al day, and yit here part was noon.
Ther com a kyte, whil that they were wrothe,
And bar awey the boon bitwixe hem bothe.
And therfore at the kynges court, my brother,
Eche man for himself, ther is non other.
Love if the list; for I love and ay schal:
And sothly, leeve brother, this is al.
Eke in this prisoun moote we endure,
And every of us take his aventure."

1165.—*the olde clerkes sawe.* Boethius, who says, in his treatise *De Consolat. Philos.* lib. iii, met. 12,—

Quis legem det amantibus?
Major lex amor est sibi.

1179.—*houndes.* This is a medieval fable which I have not met with elsewhere, though it may probably be found in some of the inedited collections.

Gret was the stryf and long bytwixe hem tweye,
If that I hadde leysir for to seye:
But to the effect, it happed on a day,
(To telle it yow as schortly as I may)
A worthy duk that highte Perotheus,
That felaw was to the duk Theseus
Syn thilke day that they were children lyte,
Was come to Athenes, his felawe to visite,
And for to pley, as he was wont to do,
For in this world he loved noman so:
And he loved him as tendurly agayn.
So wel they loved, as olde bookes sayn,
That whan that oon was deed, sothly to telle,
His felawe wente and sought him doun in helle:
But of that story lyst me nought to write.
Duk Perotheus loved wel Arcite,
And hadde him knowe at Thebes yeer by yeer:
And fynally at requeste and prayer
Of Perotheus, withoute any raunsoun
Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoun,
Frely to go, wher him lust over al,
In such a gyse, as I you telle schal.
This was the forward, playnly to endite,
Betwixe Theseus and him Arcite:
That if so were, that Arcite were founde
Evere in his lyf, by daye or night, o stound
In eny contré of this Theseus,

1202.—*in helle.* An allusion to the classic story of Theseus and Pirithous.

And he were caught, it was acorded thus,
That with a swerd he scholde lese his heed;
Ther nas noon other remedy ne reed,
But took his leeve, and homward he him spedde;
Let him be war, his nekke lith to wedde.
How gret a sorwe suffreth now Arcite!
The deth he feleth thorugh his herte smyte;
He weepeth, weyleth, cryeth pitously;
To slen himself he wayteth pryvyly.
He seyde, "Allas the day that I was born!
Now is my prisoun werse than was biforne:
Now is me schape eternally to dwelle
Nought in purgatorie, but in helle.
Allas! that ever knewe I Perotheus!
For elles had I dweld with Theseus
I-fetered in his prisoun for evere moo.
Than had I ben in blis, and nat in woo.
Oonly the sight of hir, whom that I serve,
Though that I hir grace may nat deserve,
Wold han sufficed right ynough for me.
O dere cosyn Palamon," quod he,
"Thyn is the victoire of this aventure,
Ful blisfully in prisoun to endure;
In prisoun? nay, certes but in paradys!
Wel hath fortune y-torned the the dys,
That hath the sight of hir, and I the absence.
For possible is, syn thou hast hir presence,
And art a knight, a worthi and an able,
That by som cas, syn fortune is chaungable,

Thou maist to thy desir somtyme atteyne.
But I that am exiled, and bareyne
Of alle grace, and in so gret despeir,
That ther nys water, erthe, fyr, ne eyr,
Ne creature, that of hem maked is,
That may me helpe ne comfort in this.
Wel ought I sterve in wanhope and distresse;
Farwel my lyf and al my jolynesse.
Allas, why playnen folk so in comune
Of purveance of God, or of fortune,
That geveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse
Wel better than thei can hemself devyse?
Som man desireth for to have richesse,
That cause is of his morthre or gret seeknesse.
And som man wolde out of his prisoun fayn,
That in his hous is of his mayné slayn.
Infinite harmes ben in this mateere;
We wote nevere what thing we prayen heere.
We faren as he that dronke is as a mows.
A dronke man wot wel he hath an hous,
But he not nat which the righte wey is thider,
And to a dronke man the wey is slider,
And certes in this world so faren we.
We seeken faste after felicité,
But we gon wrong ful ofte trewely.
Thus may we seyen alle, namely I,
That wende have had a gret opinioun,

1264.—*a dronke man.* From Boethius *De Consol.* lib. iii. pr. 2. sed velut ebrius, domum quo tramite revertatur ignorat.

That gif I mighte skape fro prisoun,
Than had I be in joye and parfyt hele,
Ther now I am exiled fro my wele.
Syn that I may not se yow, Emelye,
I nam but deed; ther nys no remedye."
Uppon that other syde Palamon,
Whan he wiste that Arcite was agoon,
Such sorwe maketh, that the grete tour
Resowneth of his yollyng and clamour.
The pure feteres of his schynes grete
Weren of his bitter salte teres wete.
"Allas!" quod he, "Arcita, cosyn myn,
Of al oure strif, God woot, the fruyt is thin.
Thow walkest now in Thebes at thi large,
And of my woo thou gevest litel charge.
Thou maiste, syn thou hast wysdom and manhede,
Assemble al the folk of oure kynrede,
And make a werre so scharpe in this cité,
That by som aventure, or by som treté,
Thou mayst hire wynne to lady and to wyf,
For whom that I most needes leese my lyf.
For as by wey of possibilité,
Syn thou art at thi large of prisoun free,
And art a lord, gret is thin avantage,
More than is myn, that sterve here in a kage.
For I moot weepe and weyle, whil I lyve,
With al the woo that prisoun may me gyve,
And eek with peyne that love me geveth also,
That doubleth al my torment and my wo."

Therwith the fuyr of jelousye upsterte
Withinne his brest, and hent him by the herte
So wodly, that lik was he to byholde
The box-tree, or the asschen deed and colde.
Tho seyde he; "O goddes cruel, that governe
This world with byndyng of youre word eterne,
And writen in the table of athamaunte
Youre parlement and youre eterne graunte,
What is mankynde more to yow holde
Than is a scheep, that rouketh in the folde?
For slayn is man right as another beste,
And dwelleth eek in prisoun and arreste,
And hath seknesse, and greet adversité,
And ofte tymes gilteles, pardé.
What governaunce is in youre prescience,
That gilteles tormenteth innocence?
And yet encreceth this al my penaunce,
That man is bounden to his observaunce
For Goddes sake to letten of his wille,
Ther as a beste may al his lust fulfille.
And whan a beste is deed, he ne hath no peyne;
But man after his deth moot wepe and pleyne,
Though in this world he have care and woo:
Withouten doute it may stonde so.
The answer of this I lete to divinis,
But wel I woot, that in this world gret pyne is.
Allas! I se a serpent or a theef,
That many a trewe man hath doon mescheef,
Gon at his large, and wher him lust may turne.

But I moste be in prisoun thurgh Saturne,
And eek thorugh Juno, jalous and eke wood,
That hath destruyed wel neyh al the blood
Of Thebes, with his waste walles wyde.
And Venus sleeth me on that other syde
For jelousye, and fere of him Arcyte."
Now wol I stynte of Palamon a lite,
And lete him stille in his prisoun dwelle,
And of Arcita forth than wol I telle.
The somer passeth, and the nightes longe
Encrescen double wise the peynes stronge
Bothe of the lover and the prisoner.
I noot which hath the wofullere cheer.
For schortly for to sey, this Palamon
Perpetuelly is dampned to prisoun,
In cheynes and in feteres to be deed;
And Arcite is exiled upon his heed
For evere mo as out of that contré,
Ne nevere mo he schal his lady see.
Now lovyeres axe I this question,
Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamon?
That on may se his lady day by day,
But in prisoun he moot dwelle alway.
That other may wher him lust ryde or go,
But seen his lady schal he never mo.
Now deemeth as you luste, ye that can,
For I wol telle forth as I bigan.

1349.—*this question.* An implied allusion to the medieval courts of love, in which questions of this kind were seriously discussed.

Whan that Arcite to Thebes come was,
Ful ofte a day he swelde and seyde alas,
For seen his lady schal he never mo.
And schortly to concluden al his wo,
So moche sorwe had never creature,
That is or schal whil that the world wol dure.
His sleep, his mete, his drynk is him byraft,
That lene he wexe, and drye as eny schaft.
His eyen holwe, grisly to biholde;
His hewe falwe, and pale as asschen colde,
And solitary he was, and ever alone,
And dwellyng all the night, making his moone.
And if he herde song or instrument,
Then wolde he wepe, he mighte nought be stent.
So feble were his spirites, and so lowe,
And chaunged so, that no man couthe knowe
His speche nother his vois, though men it herde.
And in his gir, for all the world he ferde
Noüght oonly lyke the lovers maladye
Of Hercos, but rather lik manye,
Engendrud of humour malencolyk,
Byforne in his selle fantastyk.

1378.—*in his selle fantastyk.* Tyrwhitt reads, *Beforne his hed in his celle fantastike.* The division of the brain into cells, according to the different sensitive faculties, is very ancient aud is found depicted in medieval manuscripts. It was a rude fore-runner of the science of phrenology. The 'fantastic cell' *(fantasia)* was in front of the head. In MS. Harl. No. 4025. is a treatise entitled *Liber Thesauri Occulti*, in which (fol. 5, r°.), we are informed, "Et est in cerebro rationativa, in corde irascibilis vel inspirativa, in epate voluntaria vel concupiscibilia. . . . . Verumptamen certum est in prora cerebri esse fantasiam, in medio rationem discretionis, in puppi memoriam; quarum si aliqua naturali

And schortly turned was al up-so-doun
Bothe abyt and eek disposicioun
Of him, this woful lovere daun Arcite.
What schulde I alway of his wo endite?
Whan he endured hadde a yeer or tuoo
This cruel torment, and this peyne and woo,
At Thebes, in his contré, as I seyde,
Upon a night in sleep as he him leyde,
Him thought that how the venged god Mercurie
Byforn him stood, and bad him to be murye.
His slepy yerd in hond he bar upright;
An hat he wered upon his heres bright.
Arrayed was this god (as he took keepe)
As he was whan that Argous took his sleep;
And seyde him thus: "To Athenes schalt thou wende;
Ther is the schapen of thy wo an ende."
And with that word Arcite wook and sterte.
"Now trewely how sore that me smerte,"
Quod he, "to Athenes right now wol I fare;
Ne for the drede of deth schal I not spare
To see my lady, that I love and serve;
In hire presence I recche nat to sterve."
And with that word he caught a gret myrour,

infirmitate vel percussione desipuerit et maxime memoria, prorsus et sompnia perempta sunt, si ratio vel fantasia vero destructa, sompnia quoquo modo ex memoria remanserunt. Si itaque homo multa per sompnium sæpe viderit et oblitus fuerit ea quæ vidit, scito memorialem partem cerebri ejus tenebrositate et obscuritate detentam esse. Similiter de ratione vel judicio et fantasia præjudicandum est, et infirmitati futuræ præcavendum."

1384.—I retain Tyrwhitt's reading of this line, which in the Harl. MS. runs, *In this cruel torment, peyne, and woo.*

And saugh that chaunged was al his colour,
And saugh his visage was in another kynde.
And right anoon it ran him into mynde,
That seththen his face was so disfigured
Of maladie the which he hath endured,
He mighte wel, if that he bar him lowe,
Lyve in Athenes evere more unknowe,
And see his lady wel neih day by day.
And right anon he chaunged his aray,
And clothed him as a pore laborer.
And al alone, save oonly a squyer,
That knew his pryvyté and al his cas,
Which was disgysed povrely as he was,
To Athenes is he go the nexte way.
And to the court he went upon a day,
And at the gate he profred his servyse,
To drugge and drawe, what so men wolde devyse.
And schortly of this matier for to seyn,
He fel in office with a chambirleyn,
The which that dwellyng was with Emelye.
For he was wys, and couthe sone aspye
Of every servaunt, which that served here.
Wel couthe he hewe woode, and water bere,
For he was yonge and mighty for the nones,
And therto he was strong and bygge of bones
To doon that eny wight can him devyse.
A yeer or two he was in this servise,
Page of the chambre of Emelye the bright;
And Philostrate he seide that he hight.

But half so wel beloved a man as he,
Ne was ther never in court of his degree.
He was so gentil of his condicioun,
That thorughout al the court was his renoun.
They seyde that it were a charité
That Theseus wolde enhaunsen his degree,
And putten him in worschipful servyse,
Ther as he might his vertu excersise.
And thus within a while his name spronge
Bothe of his dedes, and of goode tonge,
That Theseus hath taken him so neer
That of his chambre he made him squyer,
And gaf him gold to mayntene his degree;
And eek men brought him out of his countré
Fro yeer to yer ful pryvyly his rente,
But honestly and sleighly he it spente,
That no man wondred how that he it hadde.
And thre yeer in this wise his lyf he ladde,
And bar him so in pees and eek in werre,
Ther nas no man that Theseus hath so derre.
And in this blisse lete I now Arcite,
And speke I wole of Palamon a lyte.
In derknes and orrible and strong prisoun
This seven yeer hath seten Palamon,
Forpyned, what for woo and for destresse.
Who feleth double sorwe and hevynesse
But Palamon? that love destreyneth so,
That wood out of his witt he goth for wo,

1439.—*within.* The MS. Harl. reads incorrectly *withinne*, which is the adverbial form of the preposition.

And eek therto he is a prisoner
Perpetuelly, nat oonly for a yeer.
Who couthe ryme in Englissch propurly
His martirdam? for sothe it am nat I;
Therfore I passe as lightly as I may.
It fel that in the seventhe yeer in May
The thridde night, (as olde bookes seyn,
That al this storie tellen more pleyn)
Were it by aventure or destené,
(As, whan a thing is schapen, it schal be,)
That soone aftur the mydnyght, Palamon
By helpyng of a freend brak his prisoun,
And fleeth the cité fast as he may goo,
For he had give drinke his gayler soo
Of a clarré, maad of a certayn wyn,
With nercotykes and opye of Thebes fyn,
That al that night though that men wolde him schake,
The gayler sleep, he mighte nought awake.
And thus he fleeth as fast as ever he may.
The night was schort, and faste by the day,
That needes cost he moste himselven hyde.
And til a grove ther faste besyde
With dredful foot than stalketh Palamon.
For schortly this was his opynyoun,
That in that grove he wolde him hyde al day,
And in the night then wolde he take his way
To Thebes-ward, his frendes for to preye
On Theseus to helpe him to werreye.
And schortelich, or he wolde lese his lyf,

Or wynnen Emelye unto his wyf.
This is theffect of his entente playn.
Now wol I torne unto Arcite agayn,
That litel wiste how nyh that was his care,
Til that fortune hath brought him in the snare.
The busy larke, messager of daye,
Saluëth in hire song the morwe gray;
And fyry Phebus ryseth up so bright,
That al the orient laugheth of the light,
And with his stremes dryeth in the greves
The silver dropes, hongyng on the leeves.
And Arcite, that is in the court ryal
With Theseus, his squyer principal,
Is risen, and loketh on the mery day.
And for to doon his observance to May,
Remembryng of the poynt of his desire,
He on his courser, stertyng as the fire,
Is riden into feeldes him to pleye,
Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye.
And to the grove, of which that I yow tolde,
By aventure his wey he gan to holde,
To make him a garland of the greves,
Were it of woodewynde or hawthorn leves,
And lowde he song agens the sonne scheene:
"May, with al thyn floures and thy greene,
Welcome be thou, wel faire freissche May,
I hope that I som grene gete may."

1493.—*messager of day*. The Harl. MS. reads *of May*. Three lines below, Twyrhitt reads *sight* for *light*, very unpoetically.

And fro his courser, with a lusty herte,
Into the grove ful lustily he sterte,
And in a pathe he romed up and doun,
Ther by aventure this Palamoun
Was in a busche, that no man might him see,
Ful sore afered of his deth was he.
Nothing ne knew he that it was Arcite.
God wot he wolde have trowed it ful lite.
For soth is seyde, goon ful many yeres,
That feld hath eyen, and the woode hath eeres.
It is ful fair a man to bere him evene,
For al day meteth men atte unset stevene.
Ful litel woot Arcite of his felawe,
That was so neih to herken of his sawe,
For in the busche he stynteth now ful stille.
Whan that Arcite had romed al his fille,
And songen al the roundel lustily,
Into a studie he fel sodeynly,
As doth thes lovers in here queynte geeres,
Now in the croppe, now doun in the breres,
Now up, now doun, as boket in a welle.
Right as the Friday, sothly for to telle,
Now it schyneth, now it reyneth faste,

1524.—*feld hath eyen.* This was a very popular old proverb. See my Essays on subjects connected with the Literature, &c of the Middle Ages, i, p. 168. A Latin rhymer has given the following version of it, not uncommon in MSS.

Campus habet lumen, et habet nemus auris acumen.

1537.—*now it schyneth.* Tyrwhitt reads *now schineth it*, and proposes on bad MS. authority *now itte shineth;* but he was wrong in supposing that "*itte* may have been a dissyllable formerly, as well as *atte*."

Right so gan gery Venus overcaste
The hertes of hire folk, right as hir day
Is grisful, right so chaungeth hire aray.
Selde is the Fryday al the wyke i-like.
Whan that Arcite hadde songe, he gan to sike,
And sette him doun withouten eny more:
"Alas!" quod he, "that day that I was bore!
How longe, Juno, thurgh thy cruelté
Wiltow werreyen Thebes the citee?
Allas! i-brought is to confusioun
The blood royal of Cadme and Amphioun:
Of Cadynus, the which was the furst man
That Thebes bulde, or first the toun bygan,
And of that cité first was crowned kyng,
Of his lynage am I, and his ofspring
By verray lyne, and of his stok ryal:
And now I am so caytyf and so thral,
That he that is my mortal enemy,
I serve him as his squyer povrely.
And yet doth Juno me wel more schame,
For I dar nought byknowe myn owne name,
But ther as I was wont to hote Arcite,
Now hoote I Philostrate, nought worth a myte.
Allas! thou felle Mars, allas! Juno,
Thus hath youre ire owre lynage fordo,
Save oonly me, and wrecchid Palamon,
That Theseus martyreth in prisoun.
And over all this, to slee me utterly,

1540.—*grisful.* The two Cambridge MSS. have *gerful* and *geryful*, which is perhaps right.

Love hath his fyry dart so brennyngly
I-stykid thorugh my trewe careful herte,
That schapen was my deth erst than my scherte.
Ye slen me with youre eyhen, Emelye;
Ye ben the cause wherfore that I dye.
Of al the remenant of al myn other care
Ne sette I nought the mountaunce of a tare,
So that I couthe do ought to youre plesaunce."
And with that word he fel doun in a traunce
A longe tyme; and aftirward upsterte
This Palamon, that thoughte thurgh his herte
He felt a cold swerd sodeynliche glyde,
For ire he quook, he nolde no lenger abyde.
And whan that he hath herd Arcites tale,
As he were wood, with face deed and pale,
He sterte him up out of the bussches thikke,
And seyd: "Arcyte, false traitour wikke,
Now art thou hent, that lovest my lady so,
For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,
And art my blood, and to my counseil sworn,
As I ful ofte have told the heere byforn,
And hast byjaped here the duke Theseus,
And falsly chaunged hast thy name thus;

1568.—*than my scherte.* This appears to have been a proverbial phrase, and is explained by two passages from other poems of Chaucer. In the Legende of good women, l. 2618,—

Sens first that day, that shapen was my sherte,
Or by the fatal suster had my dome.

and in the third book of Troilus and Creseide, l. 734,—

O fatal sustren, whiche, or any clothe
Me shapen was, my destinee mo sponne.

I wol be deed, or elles thou schalt dye.
Thou schalt not love my lady Emelye,
But I wil love hire oonly and no mo;
For I am Palamon thy mortal fo.
And though that I no wepen have in this place,
But out of prisoun am y-stert by grace,
I drede not, that other thou schalt dye,
Or thou ne schalt not love Emelye.
Chese which thou wilt, for thou schalt not asterte."
This Arcite, with ful despitous herte,
Whan he him knew, and had his tale herde,
As fers as a lyoun, pulleth out a swerde,
And seide thus: "By God that sitteth above,
Nere it that thou art sike and wood for love,
And eek that thou no wepne hast in this place,
Thou schuldest never out of this grove pace,
That thou ne schuldest deyen of myn hond.
For I defye the seurté and the bond
Which that thou seyst I have maad to the.
For, verray fool, thenk that love is fre,
And I wol love hire mawgré al thy might.
But, for thou art a gentil perfight knight,
And wenest to dereyne hire by batayle,
Have heere my trouthe, to morwe I nyl not fayle,
Withouten wityng of eny other wight,
That heer I wol be founden as a knight,

1604.—The MS. Harl. reads, *But out of prisoun art y-stert by grace*, which probably arose from a mistake of the scribe, who seeing that line 1603 was a repetition of 1593, thought that the next line (1594) was to be repeated also.

And bryngen harneys right inough for the;
And ches the best, and lef the worst for me.
And mete and drynke this night wil I bryng
Inough for the, and cloth for thy beddyng.
And if so be that thou my lady wynne,
And sle me in this wood that I am inne,
Thou maist wel have thy lady as for me."
This Palamon answereth, "I graunt it the."
And thus they ben departed til a-morwe,
Whan ech of hem had leyd his feith to borwe.
O Cupide, out of al charité!
O regne, that wolt no felaw have with the!
Ful soth is seyde, that love ne lordschipe
Wol not, his thonkes, have no felaschipe.
Wel fynden that Arcite and Palamoun.
Arcite is riden anon to the toun,
And on the morwe, or it were day light,
Ful prively two harneys hath he dight,
Bothe sufficaunt and mete to darreyne
The batayl in the feeld betwix hem tweyne.
And on his hors, alone as he was born,
He caryed al this harneys him byforn;
And in the grove, at tyme and place i-sette,
This Arcite and this Palamon ben mette.
Tho chaungen gan here colour in here face.
Right as the honter in the regne of Trace
That stondeth in the gappe with a spere,
Whan honted is the lyoun or the bere,
And hereth him come russhyng in the greves,

And breketh bothe the bowes and the leves,
And thenketh, "Here cometh my mortel enemy,
Withoute faile, he mot be deed or I;
For eyther I mot slen him at the gappe,
Or he moot slee me, if it me myshappe:"
So ferden they, in chaungyng of here hew,
As fer as eyther of hem other knewe.
Ther nas no good day, ne so saluyng;
But streyt withouten wordes rehersyng,
Every of hem helpeth to armen other,
As frendly as he were his owen brother;
And thanne with here scharpe speres stronge
They foyneden ech at other wonder longe.
Tho it semed that this Palamon
In his fightyng were as a wood lyoun,
And as a cruel tygre was Arcite:
As wilde boores gonne they togeder smyte,
That frothen white as fome for ire wood.
Up to the ancle they faught in here blood.
And in this wise I lete hem fightyng welle;
And forthere I wol of Theseus telle.
The destiné, mynistre general,
That executeth in the world over al
The purveans, that God hath seye byforn;
So strong it is, that they the world had sworn
The contrary of a thing by ye or nay,
Yet som tyme it schal falle upon a day

1666.—*executeth.* The MS. Harl. reads, *excused.*
1670.—The sentiment expressed in this and the following line is taken direct from the Teseide,—

That falleth nought eft in a thousend yeere.
For certeynly oure appetites heere,
Be it of werre, of pees, other hate, or love,
Al is it reuled by the sight above.
This mene I now by mighty Theseus,
That for to honte is so desirous,
And namely the grete hert in May,
That in his bed ther daweth him no day,
That he nys clad, and redy for to ryde
With hont and horn, and houndes him byside.
For in his hontyng hath he such delyt,
That is his joye and his appetyt
To been himself the grete herts bane,
For after Mars he serveth now Diane.
Cleer was the day, as I have told or this,
And Theseus, with alle joye and blys,
With his Ypolita, the fayre queene,
And Emelye, clothed al in greene,
On hontyng be thay riden ryally.
And to the grove, that stood ther faste by,
In which ther was an hert as men him tolde,
Duk Theseus the streyte wey hath holde.
And to the launde he rydeth him ful right,
Ther was the hert y-wont to have his flight,
And over a brook, and so forth in his weye.
This duk wol have of him a cours or tweye
With houndes, which as him lust to comaunde.

Ma come nui vegian venir in hora
Cossa che in mille anni non aviene.

And whan this duk was come into the launde,
Under the sonne he loketh, right anon
He was war of Arcite and Palamon,
That foughten breeme, as it were boores tuo;
The brighte swerdes wente to and fro
So hidously, that with the leste strook
It seemeth as it wolde felle an ook;
But what they were, nothing yit he woot.
This duk with spores his courser he smoot,
And at a stert he was betwix hem tuoo,
And pullid out a swerd and cride, "Hoo!
Nomore, up peyne of leesyng of your heed.
By mighty Mars, anon he schal be deed,
That smyteth eny strook, that I may seen!
But telleth me what mestir men ye been,
That ben so hardy for to fighten heere
Withoute jugge or other officere,
As it were in a lyste really."
This Palamon answerde hastily,
And seyde: "Sire, what nedeth wordes mo?
We han the deth deserved bothe tuo.
Tuo woful wrecches been we, and kaytyves,
That ben encombred of oure owne lyves;
And as thou art a rightful lord and juge,
Ne geve us neyther mercy no refuge.
And sle me first, for seynte charité;
But sle my felaw eek as wel as me.
Or sle him first; for, though thou knowe him lyte,

1701.—*boores tuo.* Tyrwhitt, with most of the MSS., reads *bolles* (bulls).

This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,
That fro thy lond is banyscht on his heed,
For which he hath i-served to be deed.
For this is he that come to thi gate
And seyde, that he highte Philostrate.
Thus hath he japed the many a yer,
And thou hast maad of him thy cheef squyer.
And this is he that loveth Emelye.
For sith the day is come that I schal dye,
I make pleynly my confessioun,
That I am the woful Palamoun,
That hath thy prisoun broke wikkedly.
I am thy mortal foo, and it am I
That loveth so hoote Emely the bright,
That I wol dye present in hire sight.
Therfore I aske deeth and my juwyse;
But slee my felaw in the same wyse,
For bothe we have served to be slayn."
This worthy duk answerde anon agayn,
And seide, "This is a schort conclusioun:
Your owne mouth, by your owne confessioun,
Hath dampned you bothe, and I wil it recorde.
It nedeth nought to pyne yow with the corde.
Ye schul be deed by mighty Mars the reede!"
The queen anon for verray wommanhede

1749.—*Mars the reede.* Tyrwhitt has quoted Boccacio for the same epithet, used at the opening of his Teseide—"O rubicondo Marte"—it refers, of course, to the colour of the planet. The medieval writers constantly mixed up their astrological notions of the planets in their manner of looking at the poetical deities of the ancients.

Gan for to wepe, and so dede Emelye,
And alle the ladies in the companye.
Gret pité was it, as it thought hem alle,
That evere such a chaunce schulde falle;
For gentil men thi were and of gret estate,
And nothing but for love was this debate.
And saw here bloody woundes wyde and sore;
And alle they cryde lesse and the more,
" Have mercy, Lord, upon us wommen alle!"
And on here bare knees anoon they falle,
And wolde have kissed his feet right as he stood,
Til atte laste aslaked was his mood;
For pité renneth sone in gentil herte.
And though he first for ire quok and sterte,
He hath it al considered in a clause,
The trespas of hem bothe, and here cause:
And although his ire here gylt accused,
Yet in his resoun he hem bothe excused;
And thus he thought that every maner man
Wol help himself in love if that he can,
And eek delyver himself out of prisoun.
And eek in his hert had compassioun
Of wommen, for they wepen ever in oon:
And in his gentil hert he thought anoon,
And sothly he to himself seyde: " Fy
Upon a lord that wol have no mercy,
But be a lyoun bothe in word and dede,
To hem that ben in repentaunce and drede,

1761.—The MS. Harl. reads *bare feet*, which makes the line too long.

As wel as to a proud dispitious man,
That wol maynteyne that he first bigan.
That lord hath litel of discrecioun,
That in such caas can no divisioun:
But wayeth pride and humblenesse after oon.
And schortly, whan his ire is over gon,
He gan to loke on hem with eyen light,
And spak these same wordes al in hight.
"The god of love, a! *benedicite*,
How mighty and how gret a lord is he!
Agayne his might ther gayneth non obstacle,
He may be cleped a god of his miracle;
For he can maken at his owen gyse
Of ever herte, as him lust devyse.
Lo her is Arcite and Palamon,
That quytely were out of my prisoun,
And might have lyved in Thebes ryally,
And witen I am here mortal enemy,
And that here deth lith in my might also,
And yet hath love, maugré here eyghen tuo,
I-brought hem hider bothe for to dye.
Now loketh, is nat that an heih folye?
Who may be a fole, if that he love?
Byholde for Goddes sake that sitteth above,
Se how they blede! be they nought wel arrayed?
Thus hath here lord, the god of love, hem payed
Here wages and here fees for here servise.

1785.—*eyen light.* The Harl. MS. has *black and light*, which makes the line too long, and the epithet *black* is evidently redundant.

And yet wenen they to ben ful wise,
That serven love, for ought that may bifalle.
But this is yette the beste game of alle,
That sche, for whom they have this jelousye,
Can hem therfore as moche thank as me.
Sche woot no more of al this hoote fare
By God, than wot a cuckow or an hare.
But all moot ben assayed hoot or colde;
A man moot ben a fool other yong or olde;
I woot it by myself ful yore agon:
For in my tyme a servant was I on.
And sythen that I knewe of loves peyne,
And wot how sore it can a man destreyne,
As he that hath often ben caught in his lace,
I you forgeve holly this trespace,
At the request of the queen that kneleth heere,
And eek of Emely, my suster deere.
And ye schullen bothe anon unto me swere,
That never ye schullen my corowne dere,
Ne make werre on me night ne day,
But be my freendes in alle that ye may.
I you forgeve this trespas every dele."
And they him swore his axyng fayre and wele,
And him of lordschip and of mercy prayde,

1817.—*And sythen that.* Taken literally from the Teseide,—

Ma pero che gia inamorato fui,
E per amor sovente folegiai,
M'e caro molto il perdonare altrui.

1828.—*fayre and wele.* The MS. Harl. reads *every dele*, evidently a mere blundering repetition by the scribe of the conclusion of the preceding line.

And he hem graunted mercy, and thus he sayde:
"To speke of real lynage and riches,
Though that sche were a queen or a prynces,
Ilk of yow bothe is worthy douteles
To wedde when tyme is, but natheles
I speke as for my suster Emelye,
For whom ye have this stryf and jelousye,
Ye woot youreself sche may not wedde two
At oones, though ye faughten ever mo:
That oon of yow, or be him loth or leef,
He may go pypen in an ivy leef:
This is to say, sche may nought have bothe,
Al be ye never so jelous, ne so lothe.
For-thy I put you bothe in this degré,
That ilk of you schal have his destyné,
As him is schape, and herken in what wyse;
Lo here your ende of that I schal devyse.
My wil is this, for playn conclusioun,
Withouten eny repplicacioun,
If that you liketh, tak it for the best,
That every of you schal go wher him lest
Frely withouten raunsoun or daungeer;
And this day fyfty wykes, fer ne neer,
Everich of you schal bryng an hundred knightes,
Armed for lystes up at alle rightes
Al redy to derayne hir by batayle.
And thus byhote I you withouten fayle
Upon my trouthe, and as I am a knight,
That whethir of yow bothe that hath might,

This is to seyn, that whethir he or thou
May with his hundred, as I spak of now,
Sle his contrary, or out of lystes dryve,
Him schal I geve Emelye to wyve,
To whom that fortune geveth so fair a grace.
The lyste schal I make in this place,
And God so wisly on my sowle rewe,
As I schal even juge ben and trewe.
Ye schul non othir ende with me make,
That oon of yow schal be deed or take.
And if you thinketh this is wel i-sayde,
Say youre avys, and holdeth yow apayde.
This is youre ende, and youre conclusioun."
Who loketh lightly now but Palamoun?
Who spryngeth up for joye but Arcite?
Who couthe telle, or who couthe endite,
The joye that is made in this place
Whan Theseus hath don so fair a grace?
But down on knees wente every wight,
And thanked him with al here hertes might,
And namely the Thebanes ofte sithe.
And thus with good hope and herte blithe
They taken here leve, and hom-ward they ryde
To Thebes-ward, with olde walles wyde.
I trow men wolde it deme necligence,
If I forgete to telle the dispence
Of Theseus, that goth so busily

1882.—I have added *ward* (which has evidently been omitted by the scribe of the MS. Harl.) from one of the Cambridge MSS.

To maken up the lystes rially.
And such a noble theatre as it was,
I dar wel say that in this world ther nas.
The circuite ther was a myle aboute,
Walled of stoon, and dyched al withoute.
Round was the schap, in maner of compaas,
Ful of degré, the height of sixty paas,
That whan a man was set in o degré
He letted nought his felaw for to se.
Est-ward ther stood a gate of marbul whit,
West-ward such another in opposit.
And schortly to conclude, such a place
Was non in erthe, in so litel space.
In al the lond ther nas no craftys man,
That geometry or arsmetrike can,
Ne portreyour, ne kerver of ymages,
That Theseus ne gaf hem mete and wages
The theatre for to maken and devyse.
And for to don his right and sacrifise,
He est-ward hath upon the gate above,
In worschip of Venus goddes of love,
Don make an auter and an oratory;
And west-ward in the mynde and in memory
Of Mars, he hath i-maked such another,
That coste largely of gold a fother.
And north-ward, in a toret on the walle,
Of alabaster whit and reed coralle

1903.—In all this description of the arena, there is a singular modification of the idea of an ancient amphitheatre, by clothing it in the description of a mediæval tournament scene.

An oratory riche for to see,
In worschip of Dyane, goddes of chastité,
Hath Theseus i-wrought in noble wise.
But yit had I forgeten to devyse
The nobil kervyng, and the purtretures,
The schap, the contynaunce of the figures,
That weren in these oratories thre.
Furst in the temple of Venus thou may se
Wrought in the wal, ful pitous to byholde,
The broken slepes, and the sykes colde;
The sacred teeres, and the waymentyng;
The fuyry strokes of the desiryng,
That loves servauntz in thy lyf enduren;
The othes, that by her covenantz assuren.
Plesance and hope, desyr, fool-hardynesse,
Beauté and youthe, baudery and richesse,
Charmes and sorcery, lesynges and flatery,
Dispense, busynes, and jelousy,
That werud of yolo guldes a gerland,
And a cukkow sittyng on hire hand;
Festes, instrumentz, carols, and daunces,
Lust and array, and al the circumstaunces
Of love, which I rekned and reken schal,
Ech by other were peynted on the wal,
And mo than I can make of mencioun.
For sothly al the mount of Setheroun,

1929.—*sorcery*. This reading, supported by several MSS., is certainly superior to Tyrwhitt's *force*, which perhaps only arose from misreading the abbreviation, forc'e. Sorcery was considered one of the most effective modes of procuring love.

1938.—*Setheroun*. Cytheron.

Ther Venus hath hir principal dwellyng,
Was schewed on the wal here portrayng,
With alle the gardyn, and al the lustynes.
Nought was forgete the porter Ydelnes,
Ne Narcisus the fayr of yore agon,
Ne yet the foly of kyng Salamon,
Ne eek the grete strengthe of Hercules,
Thenchauntementz of Medea and Cerces,
Ne of Turnus the hard fuyry corage,
The riche Cresus caytif in servage.
Thus may we see, that wisdom and riches,
Beauté ne sleight, strengthe ne hardynes,
Ne may with Venus holde champartye,
For as sche luste the world than may sche gye.
Lo, all this folk i-caught were in hire trace,
Til thay for wo ful often sayde allas.
Sufficeth this ensample oon or tuo,
And though I couthe reken a thousend mo.
The statu of Venus glorious for to see
Was naked fletyng in the large see,
And fro the navel doun all covered was
With wawes grene, and bright as eny glas.
A citole in hire right hond hadde sche,
And on hir heed, ful semely on to see,
A rose garland ful swete, and wel smellyng,
And aboven hire heed dowves fleyng.
Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido,
Upon his schuldres were wynges two;
And blynd he was, as it is often seene;

A bowe he bar and arwes fair and greene.
Why schuld I nought as wel telle you alle
The portraiture, that was upon the walle
Within the temple of mighty Mars the reede?
Al peynted was the wal in length and breede
Like to the estres of the grisly place,
That hight the gret tempul of Mars in Trace,
In that colde and frosty regioun,
Ther as Mars hath his sovereyn mancioun.
First on the wal was peynted a foreste,
In which ther dwelled neyther man ne beste,
With knotty knarry bareyn trees olde
Of stubbes scharpe and hidous to byholde;
In which ther ran a swymbul in a swough,
As it were a storme schuld berst every bough:
And downward on an hil under a bent,
Ther stood the tempul of Marz armypotent,
Wrought al of burned steel, of which thentré
Was long and streyt, and gastly for to see.
And therout cam a rage and suche a prise,
That it maad al the gates for to rise.
The northen light in at the dore schon,

1968.—*greene.* So the Harl. MS. Others read *schene*, and *kene*, the latter of which is perhaps the best.

1977.—"I shall throw together a few lines of the Teseide, which Chaucer has plainly copied in this description" (*Tyrwhitt*)—

Ne v'era bestia ancora ne pastore...
Cerri...nodosi, aspri, rigidi, e vetusti...
E le porte eran de eterno adamante
Ferrato d'ogni parte tutte quante.

1981.—*a swymbul.* This reading of MS. Harl., is supported by other MSS. Tyrwhitt, with some MSS., has *a romble and a swough.*

For wyndow on the walle ne was ther noon,
Thorugh the which men might no light discerne.
The dores wer alle ademauntz eterne,
I-clenched overthward and endelong
With iren tough; and, for to make it strong,
Every piler the tempul to susteene
Was tonne greet, of iren bright and schene.
Ther saugh I furst the derk ymaginyng
Of felony, and al the compassyng;
The cruel ire, as reed as eny gleede;
The pikepurs, and eek the pale drede;
The smyler with the knyf under his cloke;
The schipne brennyng with the blake smoke;
The tresoun of the murtheryng in the bed;
The open werres, with woundes al bi-bled;
Contek with bloody knyf, and scharp manace.
Al ful of chirkyng was that sory place.
The sleer of himself yet saugh I there,
His herte-blood hath bathed al his here;
The nayl y-dryve in the schode a-nyght;
The colde deth, with mouth gapyng upright.
Amyddes of the tempul set mischaunce,
With sory comfort and evel contynaunce.
I saugh woodnes laughyng in his rage;

2000.—*pikepurs.* The *pikepurses* were, I believe, the plunderers who followed the army, and their introduction here is not so inappropriate as Tyrwhitt seemed to think.

2005.—*contek.* I have kept Tyrwhitt's reading, supported by most of the MSS. The Harl. MS. reads *kuttud*, evidently by error.

2013.—Tyrwhitt, with most of the MSS., has *Yet saw I woodnesse laughing in his rage*, which is perhaps the correct reading. The MS. Harl. reads *woundes* for *wodnes*, and *here rage*.

The hunt strangled with wilde bores corage;
[The caroigne in the busshe, with throte y-corve;
A thousand slaine, and not of qualme y-storve;
The tiraunte, with the preye by force y-raft;
The toun destroied, ther was no thynge laft.
Yet sawgh I brente the schippes hoppesteres;
The hunte strangled with the wilde beres:] 2020
The sowe freten the child right in the cradel;
The cook i-skalded, for al his longe ladel.
Nought beth forgeten the infortune of Mart;
The carter over-ryden with his cart,
Under the whel ful lowe he lay adoun.

2015—2020.—These lines, given here from Tyrwhitt, are omitted in MS. Harl., and in some of the other MSS. I have corrected Tyrwhitt's orthography by the best of the two Cambridge MSS.

2023.—*infortune of Mart.* Tyrwhitt thinks that Chaucer might intend to be satirical in these lines, but the introduction of such apparently undignified incidents arose from the confusion already mentioned of the god of war with the planet to which his name was given, and the influence of which was supposed to produce all the disasters here mentioned. The following extract from the "Compost of Ptholomeus," already quoted, gives some of the supposed effects of Mars. "Under Mars is borne theves and robbers that kepe hye wayes, and do hurte to true men, and nyght walkers, and quarell pykers, bosters, mockers, and skoffers, and these men of Mars causeth warre and murther, and batayle, they wyll be gladly *smythes* or workers of yron, lyght fyngred, and lyers, gret swerers of othes in vengeable wyse, and a great surmyler and crafty. He is red and angry, with blacke heer, and lytell iyen, he shall be a great walker, and a maker of swordes and knyves, and a sheder of mannes blode, and a fornycatour, and a speker of rybawdry.... and good to be a *barboure* and a blode letter, and to drawe tethe, and is perylous of his handes." The following extract is from an old astrological book of the sixteenth century:—"Mars denoteth men with red faces and the skinne redde, the face round, the eyes yellow, horrible to behold, furious men, cruell, desperate, proude, sedicious, souldiers, captaines, *smythes*, colliers, bakers, alcumistes, armourers, furnishers, *butchers*, chirurgions, *barbers*, sargiants, and hangmen, according as they shal be well or evill disposed."

Ther were also of Martz divisioun,
The barbour, and the bowcher, and the smyth,
That forgeth scharpe swerdes on his stith.
And al above depeynted in a tour
Saw I conquest, sittyng in gret honour,
With the scharpe swerd over his heed
Hangynge by a sotil twyne threed.
Depeynted was ther the slaught of Julius,
Of grete Nero, and of Anthonius:
Al be that ilke tyme they were unborn,
Yet was here deth depeynted ther byforn,
By manasyng of Martz, right by figure,
So was it schewed right in the purtreture
As is depeynted in sterres above,
Who schal be slayn or elles deed for love.
Sufficeth oon ensample in stories olde,
I may not reken hem alle, though I wolde.
The statue of Mars upon a carte stood,
Armed, and loked grym as he were wood;
And over his heed ther schyneth two figures
Of sterres, that been cleped in scriptures,
That oon Puella, that othur Rubius.
This god of armes was arayed thus:
A wolf ther stood byforn him at his feet

2027.—Tyrwhitt has altered this line to *Th'armerer, and the bowyer, and the smith.* The barber and butcher, as well as the smith, were under the influence of Mars. See the extracts in the last note.

2039.—*in sterres.* It was supposed by astrologers that every man's fortunes were depicted in the stars from the beginning of the world. Other MSS., with Tyrwhitt, read *cercles.*

2042.—This line is left blank in MS. Harl.

With eyen reed, and of a man he eet:
With sotyl pencel depeynted was this storie,
In redoutyng of Mars and of his glorie.
Now to the temple of Dyane the chaste
As schortly as I can I wol me haste,
To telle you al the descripcioun.
Depeynted ben the walles up and doun,
Of huntyng and of schamefast chastité.
Ther saugh I how woful Calystopé,
Whan that Dyane was agreved with here,
Was turned from a womman to a bere,
And after was sche maad the loode-sterre:
Thus was it peynted, I can say no ferre;
Hire son is eek a sterre, as men may see.
Ther sawgh I Dyane turned intil a tree,
I mene nought the goddes Dyane,
But Peneus doughter, the whiche hight Dane.
Ther saugh I Atheon an hert i-maked,
For vengance that he saugh Dyane al naked:
I saugh how that his houndes han him caught,
And freten him, for that they knew him naught.
Yit i-peynted was a litel forthermore,
How Atthalaunce huntyd the wilde bore,
And Melyagre, and many another mo,
For which Dyane wrought hem care and woo.
Ther saugh I eek many another story,
The which me list not drawe to memory.

2063.—*a sterre.* The Harl MS. reads, by an evident mistake, *is eek aftir as men may see.*

This goddes on an hert ful hye seet,
With smale houndes al aboute hire feet,
And undernethe hir feet sche had the moone,
Wexyng it was, and schulde wane soone.
In gaude greene hire statue clothed was,
With bowe in hande, and arwes in a cas.
Hir eyghen caste sche ful lowe adoun,
Ther Pluto hath his derke regioun.
A womman travailyng was hire biforn,
But for hire child so longe was unborn
Ful pitously Lucyna gan sche calle,
And seyde; "Help, for thou mayst best of alle."
Wel couthe he peynte lyfly that it wrought,
With many a floren he the hewes bought.

Now been thise listes maad, and Theseus
That at his grete cost arayed thus
The temples and the theatres every del,
Whan it was don, it liked him right wel.
But stynt I wil of Theseus a lite,
And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.

The day approcheth of her attournyng,
That every schuld an hundred knightes bryng,
The batail to derreyne, as I you tolde;
And til Athenes, her covenant to holde,
Hath every of hem brought an hundred knightes,
Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes.
And sikerly ther trowed many a man,
That never, siththen that this world bigan
For to speke of knighthod of her hond,

As fer as God hath maked see or lond,
Nas, of so fewe, so good a company.
For every wight that loveth chyvalry,
And wold, his thankes, have a passant name,
Hath preyed that he might be of that game;
And wel was him, that therto chosen was.
For if ther felle to morwe such a caas,
I knowe wel, that every lusty knight,
That loveth paramours, and hath his might,
Were it in Engelond, or elleswhere,
They wold, here thankes, wilne to be there.
To fighte for a lady; *benedicite!*
It were a lusty sighte for to see.
And right so ferden they with Palamon.
With him ther wente knyghtes many oon:
Some wol ben armed in an haburgoun,
In a bright brest plat and a gypoun;
And som wold have a peyre plates large;
And som wold have a Pruce scheld, or a targe;
Som wol been armed on here legges weel,
And have an ax, and eek a mace of steel.
Ther nys no newe gyse, that it nas old.
Armed were they, as I have you told,
Everich after his owen opinioun.
Ther maistow se comyng with Palamoun
Ligurge himself, the grete kyng of Trace:
Blak was his berd, and manly was his face.

2124.—*Pruce.* This is the reading of most of the MSS. The MS. Harl. has *prys.*

The cercles of his eyen in his heed
They gloweden bytwixe yolw and reed,
And lik a griffoun loked he aboute,
With kempe heres on his browes stowte;
His lymes greet, his brawnes hard and stronge,
His schuldres brood, his armes rounde and longe.
And as the gyse was in his contré,
Ful heye upon a chare of gold stood he,
With foure white boles in a trays.
In stede of cote armour in his harnays,
With nayles yolwe, and bright as eny gold,
He had a bere skyn, cole-blak for old.
His lange heer y-kempt byhynd his bak,
As eny raven fether it schon for blak.
A wrethe of gold arm-gret, and huge of wight,
Upon his heed, set ful of stoones bright,
Of fyne rubeus and of fyn dyamauntz.
Aboute his chare wente white alaunz,
Twenty and mo, as grete as eny stere,
To hunte at the lyoun or at the bere,
And folwed him, with mosel fast i-bounde,
Colerd with golde, and torettes fyled rounde.
An hundred lordes had he in his route
Armed ful wel, with hertes stern and stoute.
With Arcita, in stories as men fynde,
The gret Emetreus, the kyng of Ynde,
Uppon a steede bay, trapped in steel,
Covered with cloth and of gold dyapred wel,
Cam rydyng lyk the god of armes Mars.

His coote armour was of a cloth of Tars,
Cowched of perlys whyte, round and grete.
His sadil was of brend gold newe bete;
A mantelet upon his schuldre hangyng
Bret-ful of rubies reed, as fir sparclyng.
His crispe her lik rynges was i-ronne,
And that was yalwe, and gliteryng as the sonne.
His nose was heigh, his eyen were cytryne,
His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwyn,
A fewe freknes in his face y-spreynd,
Betwixe yolwe and somdel blak y-meynd,
And as a lyoun he his lokyng caste.
Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.
His berd was wel bygonne for to sprynge;
His voys was as a trumpe thunderynge.
Upon his heed he wered of laurer grene
A garlond freisch and lusty for to sene.
Upon his hond he bar for his delyt
An egle tame, as eny lylie whyt.
An hundred lordes had he with him ther,
Al armed sauf here hedes in here ger,
Ful richely in alle maner thinges.
For trusteth wel, that dukes, erles, kynges
Were gadred in this noble companye,
For love, and for encres of chivalrye.
Aboute the kyng ther ran on every part
Ful many a tame lyoun and lepart.

2162.—*cloth of Tars.* A kind of silk, said to be the same as in other places is called *Tartarine (tartarinum)*, but the exact derivation of which appears to be somewhat uncertain.

And in this wise, thes lordes alle and some
Been on the Sonday to the cité come
Aboute prime, and in the toun alight.
This Theseus, this duk, this worthy knight,
Whan he had brought hem into his cité,
And ynned hem, everich at his degré,
He festeth hem, and doth so gret labour
To esen hem, and do hem al honour,
That yit men wene that no mannes wyt
Of non estat that cowde amenden it.
The mynstralcye, the servyce at the feste,
The grete giftes to the most and leste,
The riche aray of Theseus paleys,
Ne who sat first ne last upon the deys,
What ladies fayrest ben or best daunsyng,
Or which of hem can daunce best or sing,
Ne who most felyngly speketh of love;
What haukes sitten on the perche above,
What houndes lyen in the floor adoun,
Of al this make I now no mencioun;
But of theffect; that thinketh me the beste;
Now comth the poynt, and herkneth if you leste.
The Sonday night, or day bigan to springe,
When Palamon the larke herde synge,
Although it were nought day by houres tuo,
Yit sang the larke, and Palamon also
With holy herte, and with an heih corage
He roos, to wenden on his pilgrymage

2201.—*Theseus paleys.* The MS. Harl. reads *of Thebes his paleys.*

Unto the blisful Cithera benigne,
I mene Venus, honorable and digne.
And in hire hour, he walketh forth a paas
Unto the lystes, ther hir temple was,
And doun he kneleth, and with humble cheer
And herte sore, he seide as ye schal heer.
" Fairest of faire, o lady myn Venus,
Doughter of Jove, and spouse to Vulcanus,
Thou glader of the mount of Citheroun,
For thilke love thou haddest to Adeoun
Have pité on my bitter teeres smerte,

2219.—*And in hire hour.* "I cannot better illustrate Chaucer's astrology than by a quotation from the old Kalendrier de Bergiers, Edit. 1500, sign. K. ii. b. Qui veult savoir comme bergiers scevent quel planete regne chascune heure du jour et de la nuit, doit savoir la planete du jour qui veult s'enquerir; et la premiere heure temporelle du soleil levant ce jour est pour celluy planete, la seconde heure est pour la planete ensuivant, et la tierce pour l'autre, &c. in the following order, viz. Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Luna. To apply this doctrine to the present case. The first hour of the Sunday, reckoning from sun-rise, belonged to the Sun, the planet of the day; the second to Venus, the third to Mercury, &c. and continuing this method of allotment, we shall find that the twenty-second hour also belonged to the Sun, and the twenty-third to Venus; so that the hour of Venus, really was, as Chaucer says, two hours before sun-rise of the following day. Accordingly we are told in ver. 2273, that the third hour after Palamon set out for the temple of Venus, the Sun rose, and Emelie began to go to the temple of Diane. It is not said, that this was the hour of Diane, or the Moon, but it really was, for, as we have just seen, the twenty-third hour of Sunday belonging to Venus, the twenty-fourth must be given to Mercury, and the first hour of Monday falls in course to the Moon, the presiding planet of that day. After this Arcite is described as walking to the temple of Mars, ver. 2369, in *the nexte houre of Mars*, that is, the *fourth* hour of the day. It is necessary to take these words together, *for the nexte houre*, singly, would signify the *second* hour of the day; but that, according to the rule of rotation mentioned above, belonged to Saturn, as the *third* did to Jupiter. The *fourth* was *the nexte houre of Mars*, that occurred after the hour last named."—*Tyrwhitt.*

2223.—*Fairest of faire.* The MS. Harl. reads *fairest, O fairest.*

And tak myn humble prayer to thin herte.
Allas! I ne have no langage for to telle
Theffectes ne the tormentz of myn helle;
Myn herte may myn harmes nat bewreye;
I am so confus, that I may not seye.
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest wel
My thought, and felest what harm that I fel,
Consider al this, and rew upon my sore,
As wisly as I schal for evermore
Enforce my might thi trewe servant to be,
And holde werre alday with chastité:
That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe.
I kepe nat of armes for to yelpe,
Ne nat I aske to morn to have victorie,
Ne renoun in this caas, ne veyne glorie
Of pris of armes, blowyng up and doun,
But I wolde have ful possessioun
Of Emelye, and dye in thi servise;
Fynd thou the maner how, and in what wyse.
I recche nat, but it may better be,
To have victorie of him, or he of me,
So that I have my lady in myn armes.
For though so be that Mars be god of armes,
And ye be Venus, the goddes of love,
Youre vertu is so gret in heven above,
Thy temple wol I worschipe evermo,
And on thin auter, wher I ryde or go,
I wol do sacrifice, and fyres beete.
And if ye wol nat so, my lady sweete,

Than pray I the, to morwe with a spere
That Arcita me thurgh the herte bere.
Thanne rekke I nat, whan I have lost my lyf,
Though that Arcite have hir to his wyf.
This is theffect and ende of my prayere;
Gif me my love, thou blisful lady deere."
Whan thorisoun was doon of Palamon,
His sacrifice he dede, and that anoon
Ful pitously, with alle circumstances,
Al telle I nat as now his observances.
But at the last the statu of Venus schook,
And made a signe, wherby that he took
That his prayer accepted was that day.
For though the signe schewed a delay,
Yet wist he wel that graunted was his boone;
And with glad herte he went him hom ful soone.
The thrid hour inequal that Palamon
Bigan to Venus temple for to goon,
Up roos the sonne, and up roos Emelye,
And to the temple of Dian gan sche hye.
Hir maydens, that sche with hir thider ladde,
Ful redily with hem the fyr they hadde,
Thencens, the clothes, and the remenant al
That to the sacrifice longen schal.
The hornes ful of meth, as is the gyse,

2273.—*The thrid hour inequal.* "In the astrological system, the day, from sun-rise to sun-set, and the night, from sun-set to sun-rise, being each divided into XII hours, it is plain, that the hours of the day and night were never equal, except just at the equinoxes. The hours attributed to the planets were of this *unequal* sort. See Kalendrier de Berg. loc. cit. and our author's treatise on the Astrolabe."—*Tyrwhitt.*

Ther lakketh nought to do here sacrifise.
Smokyng the temple, ful of clothes faire,
This Emelye with herte debonaire
Hir body wessch with watir of a welle;
But how sche dide I ne dar nat telle,
But it be eny thing in general;
And yet it were a game to here it al;
To him that meneth wel it were no charge:
But it is good a man be at his large.
Hir brighte her was kempt, untressed al;
A corone of a grene ok cerial
Upon hir heed was set ful fair and meete.
Tuo fyres on the auter gan sche beete,
And did hir thinges, as men may biholde
In Stace of Thebes and the bokes olde.
Whan kynled was the fyre, with pitous cheere
Unto Dyan sche spak, as ye may heere.
"O chaste goddes of the woodes greene,
To whom bothe heven and erthe and see is seene,
Queen of the regne of Pluto, derk and lowe,
Goddes of maydenes, that myn hert has knowe
Ful many a yeer, ye woot what I desire,
As keep me fro the vengans of thilk yre,
That Atheon aboughte trewely:
Chaste goddesse, wel wost thou that I

2291.—*brighte her.* So in the Teseide, Emily is described as—
Dicho che i suo crin parevan d'oro,
Non con trezza restretti, ma soluti
E petinati.
2292.—*a corone.* Corona di querzia cereale.—*Teseide.*
2296.—*In Stace of Thebes.* In the Thebaid of Statius.

Desire to ben a mayden al my lyf,
Ne never wol I be no love ne wyf.
I am, thou wost, yit of thi company,
A mayden, and love huntyng and venery,
And for to walken in the woodes wylde,
And nought to ben a wyf, and be with chylde.
Nought wol I knowe the company of man.
Now helpe me lady, sythnes ye may and kan,
For the thre formes that thou hast in the.
And Palamon, that hath such love to me,
And eek Arcite, that loveth me so sore,
This grace I praye the withouten more,
As sende love and pees betwix hem two:
And fro me torne awey here hertes so,
That al here hoote love, and here desire,
Al here besy torment, and al here fyre
Be queynt, or turned in another place.
And if so be thou wol do me no grace,
Or if my destyné be schapid so,
That I schal needes have on of hem two,
So send me him that most desireth me.
Biholde, goddes of clene chastité,
The bitter teeres, that on my cheekes falle.
Syn thou art mayde, and keper of us alle,
My maydenhode thou kepe and wel conserve,
And whil I lyve a mayde I wil the serve."
The fyres bren upon the auter cleer,

2315.—*thre formes.* The MS. Harl., probably by a mistake of the scribe, omits the word *thre*.

Whil Emelye was in hire preyer:
But sodeinly sche saugh a sighte queynt,
For right anon on of the fyres queynt,
And quyked agayn, and after that anon
That other fyr was queynt, and al agon:
And as it queynt, it made a whistelyng,
As doth a wete brond in his brennyng.
And at the brondes end out ran anoon
As it were bloody dropes many oon:
For which so sore agast was Emelye,
That sche was wel neih mad, and gan to crie,
For sche ne wiste what it signifyed;
But oonely for feere thus sche cryed,
And wepte, that it was pité to heere.
And therwithal Dyane gan appeere,
With bow in hond, right as a hunteresse,
And seyd; "A! doughter, stynt thyn hevynesse.
Among the goddes hye it is affermed,
And by eterne word write and confermed,
Thou schalt be wedded unto oon of tho,
That have for the so moche care and wo:
But unto which of hem may I nat telle.
Farwel, for I may her no lenger dwelle.
The fyres which that on myn auter bren,
Schuln the declare, or that thou go hen,
Thyn adventure of love, and in this caas."
And with that word, the arwes in the caas
Of the goddesse clatren faste and rynge,
And forth sche went, and made a vanysschynge,

For which this Emelye astoneyd was,
And seide, "What amounteth this, allas!
I put me under thy protecciouu,
Dyane, and in thi disposicioun."
And hoom sche goth anon the nexte way.
This is theffect, ther nys no mor to say.
The nexte hour of Mars folwynge this,
Arcite to the temple walkyd is,
To fyry Mars to doon his sacrifise,
With al the rightes of his payen wise.
With pitous herte and heih devocioun,
Right thus to Mars he sayd his orisoun:
"O stronge god, that in the reynes cold
Of Trace honoured and lord art y-hold,
And hast in every regne and every land
Of armes al the bridel in thy hand,
And hem fortunest as the lust devyse,
Accept of me my pitous sacrifise.
If so be that my youthe may deserve,
And that my might be worthi for to serve
Thy godhed, that I may ben on of thine,
Then pray I the to rewe on my pyne,
For thilke peyne, and that hoote fuyre,
In which whilom thou brendest for desyre,
Whan that thou usedest the gret bewté
Of faire freissche Venus, that is so free,
And haddest hir in armes at thy wille:

2375.—The greater part of this prayer is taken almost literal the *Teseide*.

And though the ones on a tyme mysfille,
When Vulcanus had caught the in his laas,
And fand the liggyng by his wyf, allaas!
For thilke sorwe that was in thin herte,
Have reuthe as wel upon my peynes smerte.
I am yong and unkonnyng, as thou wost,
And, as I trowe, with love offendid most,
That ever was eny lyves creature:
For sche, that doth me al this wo endure,
Ne rekketh never, whether I synke or flete.
And wel I woot, or sche me mercy heete,
I moot with strengthe wyn hir in the place:
And wel I wot, withouten help or grace
Of the, ne may my strengthe nought avayle.
Then help me, lord, to morn in my batayle,
For thilke fyr that whilom brende the,
As wel as this fire now brenneth me;
And do to morn that I have the victorie.
Myn be the travail, al thin be the glorie.
Thy soverein tempul wol I most honouren
Of any place, and alway most labouren
In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes strong.
And in thy tempul I wol my baner hong,
And alle the armes of my companye,
And ever more, unto that day I dye,
Eterne fyr I wol bifore the fynde.
And eek to this avow I wol me bynde:
My berd, myn heer that hangeth longe adoun,
That never yit ne felt offensioun

Of rasour ne of schere, I wol thee give,
And be thy trewe servaunt whiles I lyve.
Lord, have rowthe uppon my sorwes sore,
Gif me the victorie, I aske no more."
The preyer stynt of Arcita the strange,
The rynges on the tempul dore that hange,
And eek the dores, clatereden ful fast,
Of which Arcita somwhat was agast.
The fyres brenden on the auter bright,
That it gan al the tempul for to light;
A swote smel anon the ground up gaf,
And Arcita anon his hand up haf,
And more encens into the fyr yet cast,
With othir rightes, and than atte last
The statu of Mars bigan his hauberk ryng.
And with that soun he herd a murmuryng
Ful lowe and dym, and sayde this, "Victorie."
For which he gaf to Mars honour and glorie.
And thus with joye, and hope wel to fare,
Arcite anoon unto his inne is fare,
As fayn as foul is of the brighte sonne.
And right anon such stryf is bygonne
For that grauntyng, in the heven above,
Bitwix Venus the goddes of love,
And Martz the sterne god armypotent,
That Jupiter was busy it to stent:
Til that the pale Saturnes the colde,
That knew so many of aventures olde,
Fond in his olde experiens an art,

That he ful sone hath plesyd every part.
As soth is sayd, eelde hath gret avantage,
In eelde is bothe wisdom and usage:
Men may the eelde at-ren, but nat at-rede.
Saturne anon, to stynte stryf and drede,
Al be it that it be agayns his kynde,
Of al this stryf he can a remedy fynde.
"My deere doughter Venus," quod Satourne,
"My cours, that hath so wyde for to tourne,
Hath more power than woot eny man.
Myn is the drenchyng in the see so wan;
Myn is the prisoun in the derke cote;
Myn is the stranglyng and hangyng by the throte;
The murmur, and the cherles rebellyng;
The groyning, and the pryvé enpoysonyng.
I do vengance and pleyn correctioun,
Whiles I dwelle in the signe of the lyoun.
Myn is the ruen of the hihe halles,
The fallyng of the toures and the walles
Upon the mynour or the carpenter:
I slowh Sampsoun in schakyng the piler.
And myne ben the maladies colde,

2453.—*agayns his kynde.* According to the "Compost of Ptholomeus," Saturn was influential in producing strife: "And the children of the sayd Saturne shall be great jangeleres and chyders.... and they will never forgyve tyll they be revenged of theyr quarell."

2456.—*My cours.* The course of the planet Saturn. See the next note.

2457.—*more power.* The "Compost of Ptholomeus," quoted above, says of Saturn; "he is mighty of hymself... It is more than xxx yere or he may ronne his course.... Whan he doth reygne, there is moche debate."

The derke tresoun, and the castes olde:
Myn lokyng is the fadir of pestilens.
Now wepe nomore, I schal do my diligence,
That Palamon, that is myn owen knight,
Schal have his lady, as thou him bihight.
Thow Martz schal kepe his knight, yet nevertheles
Bitwixe you ther moot som tyme be pees:
Al be ye nought of oo complexioun,
That ilke day causeth such divisioun.
I am thi ayel, redy at thy wille;
Wepe thou nomore, I wol thi lust fulfille."
Now wol I stynt of the goddes above,
Of Mars, and of Venus goddes of love,
And telle you, as pleinly as I can,
The grete effecte for that I bigan.
  Gret was the fest in Athenus that day,
And eek that lusty sesoun of that May
Made every wight to ben in such plesaunce,
That al the Monday jousten they and daunce,
And spende it in Venus heigh servise.
But by the cause that they schuln arise
Erly a-morwe for to see that fight,
Unto their rest wente they at nyght.
And on the morwe whan the day gan spryng,
Of hors and hernoys noyse and claterynge
Ther was in the oostes al aboute:
And to the paleys rood ther many a route
Of lordes, upon steede and palfreys.
Ther mayst thou see devysyng of herneys

So uncowth and so riche wrought and wel
Of goldsmithry, of browdyng, and of steel;
The scheldes bright, testers, and trappures;
Gold-beten helmes, hauberks, and cote armures;
Lordes in paramentes on her coursers,
Knightes of retenu, and eek squyers;
Rayhyng the speres, and helmes bokelyng,
Girdyng of scheeldes, with layneres lasyng;
Ther as need is, they were nothing ydel:
Ther fomen steedes, on the golden bridel
Gnawyng, and faste armurers also
With fyle and hamer prikyng to and fro;
Yemen on foote, and knaves many oon
With schorte staves, as thikke as they may goon;
Pypes, trompes, nakers, and clariounes,
That in the batail blewe bloody sownes;
The paleys ful of pepul up and doun,
Heer thre, ther ten, haldyng her questioun,
Dyvynyng of this Thebans knightes two.
Som seyden thus, som seyd it schal be so;
Som heelde with him with the blake berd,
Som with the ballyd, som with thikke hered;
Som sayd he loked grym as he wold fight:
He hath a sparth of twenti pound of wight.
Thus was the halle ful of devynyng,
Lang after that the sonne gan to spring.

2516.—*heer thre.* So in the Teseide,—

Qui tre, la quatro, e qui sei adunati,
Tra lor mostrando diverse ragione.

The gret Theseus that of his sleep is awaked
With menstralcy and noyse that was maked,
Held yit the chambre of his paleys riche,
Til that the Thebanes knyghtes bothe i-liche
Honoured weren, and into paleys fet.
Duk Theseus was at a wyndow set,
Arayed right as he were god in trone:
The pepul preseth thider-ward ful sone
Him for to seen, and doon him reverence,
And eek herken his hest and his sentence.
An herowd on a skaffold made a hoo,
Til al the noyse of the pepul was i-doo:
And whan he sawh the pepul of noyse al stille,
Thus schewed he the mighty dukes wille.
"The lord hath of his heih discrecioun
Considered, that it were destruccioun
To gentil blood, to fighten in this wise
Of mortal batail now in this emprise;
Wherfore to schapen that they schuld not dye,
He wol his firste purpos modifye.
No man therfore, up peyne of los of lyf,
No maner schot, ne pollax, ne schort knyf
Into the lystes sende, or thider bryng;
Ne schorte swerd for to stoke the point bytyng
No man ne draw, ne bere by his side.
Ne noman schal unto his felawe ryde

2527.—*held yit the chambre.* So the Teseide,—
Anchor le riche camere tenea
Del suo palazio.

But oon cours, with a scharpe spere;
Feyne if him lust on foote, himself to were.
And he that is at meschief, schal be take,
And nat slayn, but be brought to the stake,
That schal be ordeyned on eyther syde;
But thider he schal by force, and ther abyde.
And if so falle, a cheventen be take
On eyther side, or elles sle his make,
No lenger schal the turneynge laste.
God spede you; goth forth and ley on faste.
With long swerd and with mace fight your fille.
Goth now your way; this is the lordes wille."
The voice of the poepul touchith heven,
So lowde cried thei with mery steven:
"God save such a lord that is so good,
He wilneth no destruccioun of blood!"
Up goth the trompes and the melodye,
And to the lystes ryde the companye
By ordynaunce, thurgh the cité large,
Hangyng with cloth of gold, and not with sarge.
Ful lik a lord this nobul duk cam ryde,
These tuo Thebans on eyther side:
And after rood the queen, and Emelye,

2563.—*The voice of the poepul.* So the Teseide,—
Di nobili e del populo il romore
Tocho le stelle, se fu alto e forte,
Li dei, dicendo, servi tal signore
Che de gli amici suoi fugie la morte.

2564.—*mery.* The MS. Harl. reads *mylde.*

And after hem another companye
Of one and other, after here degré.
And thus they passeden thurgh that cité,
And to the lystes come thei by tyme:
It nas not of the day yet fully pryme.
Whan sette was Theseus riche and hye,
Ypolita the queen and Emelye,
And other ladyes in here degrees aboute,
Unto the settes passeth al the route.
And west-ward, thorugh the gates of Mart,
Arcite, and eek the hundred of his part,
With baners red ys entred right anoon;
And in that selve moment Palamon
Is, under Venus, est-ward in that place,
With baner whyt, and hardy cheer of face.
In al the world, to seeke up and doun,
So even withoute variacioun
Ther nere suche companyes tweye.
For ther nas noon so wys that cowthe seye,
That any had of other avauntage
Of worthines, ne staat, ne of visage,
So evene were they chosen for to gesse.
And in two renges faire they hem dresse.
And whan here names i-rad were everychon,

2574.—*And after hem.* The MS Harl. reads these two lines thus,—

And after hem of ladyes another companye,
And after hem of comunes after here degré.

Of ladies in the first line seems redundant, and the second line appears to have been blundered by a careless or ignorant scribe.

That in here nombre gile were ther noon,
Tho were the gates schitt, and cried lowde;
"Doth now your devoir, yonge knightes proude!"
The heraldz laften here prikyng up and doun;
Now ryngede the tromp and clarioun.
Ther is nomore to say, but est and west
In goth the speres into the rest;
Ther seen men who can juste, and who can ryde.
In goth the scharpe spere into the side.
Ther schyveren schaftes upon schuldres thyk;
He feeleth thurgh the herte-spon the prik.
Up sprengen speres on twenty foot on hight;
Out goon the swerdes as the silver bright.
The helmes ther to-hewen and to-schrede;
Out brast the blood, with stoute stremes reede.
With mighty maces the bones thay to-breste.
He thurgh the thikkest of the throng gan threste.
Ther stomblen steedes strong, and doun can falle.
He rolleth under foot as doth a balle.
He feyneth on his foot with a tronchoun,
And him hurteleth with his hors adoun.
He thurgh the body hurt is, and siththen take
Maugré his heed, and brought unto the stake,
As forward was, right ther he most abyde.
Another lad is on that other syde.
And som tyme doth Theseus hem to rest,
Hem to refreissche, and drinke if hem lest.

2617.—*on his fool.* Conf. l. 2552.

Ful ofte a-day have this Thebans twoo
Togider y-met, and wrought his felaw woo:
Unhorsed hath ech other of hem tweye.
Ther nas no tygyr in the vale of Galgopleye,
Whan that hir whelp is stole, whan it is lite,
So cruel on the hunt, as is Arcite
For jelous hert upon this Palamon:
Ne in Belmary ther is no fel lyoun,
That hunted is, or is for hunger wood,
Ne of his prey desireth so the blood,
As Palamon to sle his foo Arcite.
The jelous strokes on here helmes byte:
Out renneth blood on bothe here sides reede.
Som tyme an ende ther is on every dede.
For er the sonne unto the reste went,
The strange kyng Emetreus gan hent
This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,
And his swerd in his fleissch he did byte.
And by the force of twenti he is take
Unyolden, and i-drawe unto the stake.
And in the rescous of this Palamon
The stronge kyng Ligurgius is born adoun:
And kyng Emetreus for al his strengthe
Is born out of his sadel his swerdes lengthe,
So hit him Palamon er he were take:
But al for nought, he was brought to the stake:

2628.—*Galgopleye.* Tyrwhitt reads *Galaphey*, and conjectures that Chaucer meant Galapha in Mauritania Tingitana. *Belmarie* has been noticed before, *l.* 57.

His hardy herte might him helpe nought,
He most abyde whan that he was caught,
By force, and eek by composicioun.
Who sorweth now but woful Palamoun,
That moot nomore gon agayn to fight?
And whan that Theseus had seen that sight,
He cryed, "Hoo! nomore, for it is doon!
Ne noon schal lenger unto his felaw goon.
I wol be trewe juge, and nought partye.
Arcyte of Thebes schal have Emelye,
That hath by his fortune hire i-wonne."
Anoon ther is noyse bygonne
For joye of this, so lowde and hey withalle,
It semed that the listes wolde falle.
What can now fayre Venus doon above?
What seith sche now? what doth this queen of love?
But wepeth so, for wantyng of hir wille,
Til that hire teeres in the lystes fille:
Sche seyde: "I am aschamed douteles."
Satournus seyde: "Doughter, hold thy pees.
Mars hath his wille, his knight hath his boone,
And by myn heed thou schalt be esed soone."
The trompes with the lowde mynstralcy,
The herawdes, that ful lowde yolle and cry,
Been in here joye for daun Arcyte.
But herkneth me, and stynteth but a lite,
Which a miracle bifel anoon.
This Arcyte fersly hath don his helm adoun,
And on his courser for to schewe his face

He priked endlange in the large place,
Lokyng upward upon this Emelye;
And sche agayn him cast a frendly yghe,
(For wommen, as for to speke in comune,
Thay folwe alle the favour of fortune)
And was alle his in cheer, and in his hert.
Out of the ground a fyr infernal stert,
From Pluto send, at the request of Saturne,
For which his hors for feere gan to turne,
And leep asyde, and foundred as he leep:
And or that Arcyte may take keep,
He pight him on the pomel of his heed,
That in that place he lay as he were deed,
His brest to-broken with his sadil bowe.
As blak he lay as eny col or crowe,
So was the blood y-ronne in his face.
Anon he was y-born out of the place
With herte sore, to Theseus paleys.
Tho was he corven out of his harneys,
And in a bed y-brought ful fair and blyve,
For yit he was in memory and on lyve,
And alway cryeng after Emelye.
Duk Theseus, and al his companye,
Is comen hom to Athenes his cité,
With alle blys and gret solempnité.
Al be it that this aventure was falle,
He nolde nought discomforten hem alle.
Men seyde eek, that Arcita schuld nought dye,
He schal be helyd of his maladye.

And of another thing they were as fayn,
That of hem alle ther was noon y-slayn,
Al were they sore hurt, and namely oon,
That with a spere was thirled his brest boon.
To other woundes, and to broken armes,
Some hadde salve, and some hadde charmes,
Fermacyes of herbes, and eek save
They dronken, for they wolde here lyves have.
For which this noble duk, as he wel can,
Comforteth and honoureth every man,
And made revel al the lange night,
Unto the straunge lordes, as was right.
Ne ther was holden no discomfytyng,
But as a justes or as a turneying;
For sothly ther was no discomfiture,
For fallynge is but an adventure.
Ne to be lad with fors unto the stake
Unyolden, and with twenty knightes take,
A person allone, withouten moo,
And rent forth by arme, foot, and too,
And eke his steede dryven forth with staves,
With footemen, bothe yemen and eke knaves,
It was aretted him no vylonye:
Ne no maner man heldn it no cowardye.
For which Theseus lowd anon leet crie,

2714, 2715.—*charmes—save.* It may be observed that the salves charms, and pharmacies of herbs, were the principal remedies of the physican in the age of Chaucer. *Save (salvia,* the herb sage), was considered one of the most universally efficient of the medieval remedies.

To stynten al rancour and al envye,
The gree as wel on o syde as on other,
And every side lik, as otheres brother:
And gaf hem giftes after here degré,
And fully heeld a feste dayes thre:
And conveyed the knightes worthily
Out of his toun a journee largely.
And hom went every man the righte way,
Ther was no more, but "Farwel, have good day!"
Of this batayl I wol no more endite,
But speke of Palamon and of Arcyte.
Swelleth the brest of Arcyte, and the sore
Encresceth at his herte more and more.
The clothred blood, for eny leche-craft,
Corrumpith, and is in his bouk i-laft,
That nother veyne blood, ne ventusyng,
Ne drynk of herbes may ben his helpyng.
The vertu expulsif, or animal,
Fro thilke vertu cleped natural,
Ne may the venym voyde, ne expelle.
The pypes of his lounges gan to swelle,
And every lacerte in his brest adoun
Is schent with venym and corrupcioun.
Him gayneth nother, for to get his lyf,

2738.—*dayes thre.* Three days were the usual duration of a feast among our early forefathers. As far back as the seventh century, when Wilfred consecrated his church at Ripon, he held—magnum convivium trium dierum et noctium reges cum omni populo lætificantes. Eddius, Vit. S Wilf. c. 17. I am told that in Scotland these feasts of three days and three nights, have been preserved traditionally to a comparatively recent period.

Vomyt up-ward, ne doun-ward laxatif;
Al is to-broken thilke regioun;
Nature hath now no dominacioun.
And certeynly wher nature wil not wirche,
Farwel phisik; go bere the man to chirche.
This al and som, that Arcyte moste dye.
For which he sendeth after Emelye,
And Palamon, that was his cosyn deere.
Than seyd he thus, as ye schul after heere.

"Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte
Declare a poynt of my sorwes smerte
To you, my lady, that I love most;
But I byquethe the service of my gost
To you aboven every creature,
Syn that my lyf may no lenger dure.
Allas, the woo! allas, the peynes stronge,
That I for you have suffred, and so longe!
Allas, the deth! allas, myn Emelye!
Allas, departyng of our companye!
Allas, myn hertes queen! allas, my wyf!
Myn hertes lady, ender of my lyf!
What is this world? what asken men to have?
Now with his love, now in his colde grave
Allone withouten eny companye.
Farwel, my swete, farwel, myn Emelye!
And softe take me in your armes tweye,
For love of God, and herkneth what I seye.
I have heer with my cosyn Palamon
Had stryf and rancour many a day i-gon,

For love of yow, and eek for jelousie.
And Jupiter so wis my sowle gye,
To speken of a servaunt proprely,
With alle circumstaunces trewely,
That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and knighthede,
Wysdom, humblesse, astaat, and by kynrede,
Fredam, and al that longeth to that art,
So Jupiter have of my soule part,
As in this world right now ne know I non
So worthy to be loved as Palamon,
That serveth you, and wol do al his lyf.
And if that ye schul ever be a wyf,
Forget not Palamon, that gentil man."
And with that word his speche faile gan;
For fro his herte up to his brest was come
The cold of deth, that him had overcome.
And yet moreover in his armes twoo
The vital strength is lost, and al agoo.
Only the intellect, withouten more,
That dwelled in his herte sik and sore,
Gan fayle, whan the herte felte deth;
Duskyng his eyghen two, and fayled breth.
But on his lady yit he cast his ye;
His laste word was, "Mercy, Emelye!"
His spiryt chaunged was, and wente ther,
As I cam never, I can nat tellen wher.
Therfore I stynte, I nam no dyvynistre;

2813.—*Therfore I stynte.* Up to this point, the description of Arcite's dying moments is taken literally from the Teseide. "This," Tyrwhitt observes, "is apparently a fling at Boccace's pompous description of the passage of Arcite's soul to heaven."

Of soules fynde I not in this registre.
Ne me list nat thopynyouns to telle
Of hem, though that thei wyten wher they dwelle.
Arcyte is cold, ther Mars his soule gye:
Now wol I speke forth of Emelye.
Shright Emely, and howled Palamon,
And Theseus his sustir took anon
Swownyng, and bar hir fro the corps away.
What helpeth it to tarye forth the day,
To telle how sche weep bothe eve and morwe?
For in swich caas wommen can have such sorwe,
Whan that here housbonds ben from hem ago,
That for the more part they sorwen so,
Or elles fallen in such maladye,
That atte laste certeynly they dye.
Infynyt been the sorwes and the teeres
Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeeres;
So gret a wepyng was ther noon certayn,
Whan Ector was i-brought, al freissh i-slayn,
As that ther was for deth of this Theban;
For sorwe of him ther weepeth bothe child and man
At Troye, allas! the pité that was there,
Cracchyng of cheekes, rendyng eek of here.

2830.—*folk, and folk.* The MS. Harl. reads *olde folk that ben of tendre.* The lines which follow, are read by Tyrwhitt, on the authority of some of the MSS. (perhaps correctly) thus,—

In all the toun for deth of this Theban:
For him ther wepeth bothe childe and man.
So gret a weping was ther non certain,
Whan Hector was y-brought, all fresh y-slain,
To Troy, &c.

"Why woldist thou be deed," this wommen crye,
"And haddest gold ynowgh, and Emelye?"
No man mighte glade Theseus,
Savyng his olde fader Egeus,
That knew this worldes transmutacioun,
As he hadde seen it torne up and doun,
Joye after woo, and woo aftir gladnesse;
And schewed him ensample and likenesse.
"Right as ther deyde never man," quod he,
"That he ne lyved in erthe in som degree,
Yit ther ne lyvede never man," he seyde,
"In al this world, that som tyme he ne deyde.
This world nys but a thurghfare ful of woo,
And we ben pilgryms, passyng to and froo:
Deth is an ende of every worldly sore."
And over al this yit seide he mochil more
To this effect, ful wysly to enhorte
The peple, that they schulde him recomforte.
Duk Theseus with al his busy cure
Cast busyly wher that the sepulture
Of good Arcyte may best y-maked be,
And eek most honurable in his degré.
And atte last he took conclusioun,
That ther as first Arcite and Palamon
Hadden for love the batail hem bytwene,
That in the selve grove, soote and greene,
Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,
His compleynt, and for love his hoote fyres,
He wolde make a fyr, in which thoffice

Of funeral he might al accomplice;
And leet comaunde anon to hakke and hewe
The okes olde, and ley hem on a rewe
In culpouns wel arrayed for to brenne.
His officers with swifte foot they renne,
And ryde anon at his comaundement.
And after this, Theseus hath i-sent
After a beer, and it al overspradde
With cloth of golde, the richest that he hadde.
And of the same sute, he clad Arcyte;
Upon his hondes were his gloves white;
Eke on his heed a croune of laurer grene;
And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.
He leyde him bare the visage on the beere,
Therwith he weep that pité was to heere.
And for the poeple schulde see him alle,
Whan it was day he brought hem to the halle,
That roreth of the cry and of the soun.
Tho cam this woful Theban Palamoun,
With flotery berd, and ruggy asshy heeres,
In clothis blak, y-dropped al with teeres,
And, passyng other, of wepyng Emelye,
The rewfullest of al the companye.
And in as moche as the service schulde be
The more nobul and riche in his degré,
Duk Theseus leet forth thre steedes bryng,
That trapped were in steel al gliteryng,
And covered with armes of dan Arcyte.
Upon the steedes, that weren grete and white,

Ther seeten folk, of which oon bar his scheeld,
Another his spere up in his hondes heeld;
The thridde bar with him his bowe Turkeys,
Of brend gold was the caas and eek the herneys:
And riden forth a paas with sorwful chere
Toward the grove, as ye schul after heere.
The noblest of the Grekes that ther were
Upon here schuldres carieden the beere,
With slak paas, and eyhen reed and wete,
Thurghout the cité, by the maister streete,
That sprad was al with blak, and wonder hye
Right of the same is al the stret i-wrye.
Upon the right hond went olde Egeus,
And on that other syde duk Theseus,
With vessels in here hand of gold wel fyn,
As ful of hony, mylk, and blood, and wyn;
Eke Palamon, with a gret companye:
And after that com woful Emelye,
With fyr in hond, as was at that tyme the gyse,
To do thoffice of funeral servise.
Heygh labour, and ful gret apparailyng
Was at the service and at the fyr makyng,
That with his grene top the heven raughte,
And twenty fadme of brede tharme straughte:
This is to seyn, the boowes were so brode.
Of stree first was ther leyd ful many a loode.

2897.—*his bowe Turkeys.* In the Roman de la Rose, *l.* 913, Love is described as bearing *deux ars Turquois.*

But how the fyr was makyd up on highte,
And eek the names how the trees highte,
As ook, fyr, birch, asp, aldir, holm, popler,
Wilw, elm, plane, assch, box, chesteyn, lynde, laurer,
Mapul, thorn, beech, hasil, ew, wyppyltre,
How they weren felde, schal nought be told for me;
Ne how the goddes ronnen up and doun
Disheryt of here habitacioun,
In which they whilom woned in rest and pees,
Nymphes, Faunes, and Amadryes; 2930
Ne how the beestes and the briddes alle
Fledden for feere, whan the woode was falle;
Ne how the ground agast was of the light,
That was nought wont to see no sonne bright;
Ne how the fyr was couchid first with stree,
And thanne with drye stykkes cloven in three,
And thanne with grene woode and spicerie,
And thanne with cloth of gold and with perrye,
And gerlandes hangyng with ful many a flour,
The myrre, thensens with al so gret odour; 2940
Ne how Arcyte lay among al this,
Ne what richesse aboute his body is;
Ne how that Emely, as was the gyse,
Putt in the fyr of funeral servise;
Ne how sche swowned whan sche made the fyre,

2921.—*But how the fyr.* The description of the funeral, and several other parts of this poem, are taken originally from the Thebaid of Statius, to which Chaucer has already made a direct reference, *l.* 2296.

2930.—*Amadryes.* This is the reading of all the MSS. I have consulted. It is of course a corruption of Hamadryades.

Ne what sche spak, ne what was hire desire;
Ne what jewels men in the fyr tho cast,
Whan that the fyr was gret and brente fast;
Ne how sum caste her scheeld, and summe her spere,
And of here vestimentz, which that they were,
And cuppes ful of wyn, and mylk, and blood,
Unto the fyr, that brent as it were wood;
Ne how the Grekes with an huge route
Thre tymes ryden al the fyr aboute
Upon the lefte hond, with an heih schoutyng,
And thries with here speres clateryng;
And thries how the ladyes gan to crye;
Ne how that lad was home-ward Emelye;
Ne how Arcyte is brent to aschen colde;
Ne how the liche-wake was y-holde
Al thilke night, ne how the Grekes pleye
The wake-pleyes, kepe I nat to seye:
Who wrastleth best naked, with oyle enoynt,
Ne who that bar him best in no disjoynt.
I wol not telle eek how they ben goon
Hom til Athenes whan the pley is doon;
But schortly to the poynt now wol I wende,
And maken of my longe tale an ende.

2953.—*Grekes.* The scribe of the MS. Harl. has by inadvertence (as it is only in this instance), substituted the more legitimate old English form of the word *Gregoys*. Chaucer, following the Italian and acquainted with the classic writers, uses the form *Grekes* throughout the Knightes Tale.

2960.—This line is omitted in MS. Harl., by an oversight of the scribe.

2964.—The description of the funeral, like that of the tournament, presents a curious mixture of classic and medieval ideas, such as is found in other works of the same age.

By proces and by lengthe of certeyn yeres
Al styntyd is the mornyng and the teeres
Of alle Grekys, by oon general assent.
Than semed me ther was a parlement
At Athenes, on a certeyn poynt and cas:
Among the whiche poyntes spoken was
To han with certeyn contrees alliaunce,
And have fully of Thebans obeissance.
For which this noble Theseus anon
Let senden after gentil Palamon,
Unwist of him what was the cause and why:
But in his blake clothes sorwfully
He cam at his comaundement on hye.
Tho sente Theseus for Emelye.
Whan they were sette, and hussht was al the place,
And Theseus abyden hadde a space
Or eny word cam fro his wyse brest,
His eyen set he ther as was his lest,
And with a sad visage he syked stille,
And after that right thus he seide his wille.
"The firste moevere of the cause above,
Whan he first made the fayre cheyne of love,
Gret was theffect, and heigh was his entente;
Wel wist he why, and what therof he mente;
For with that faire cheyne of love he bond

3993.—*cheyne of love.* This sentiment is taken from Boethius, De Consolat. Phil. lib. ii, met. 8,—

Hanc rerum seriem ligat,
Terras ac pelagus regens,
Et cœlo imperitans, amor.

What follows is taken from the same writer, lib. iv, pr. 6.

The fyr, the watir, the eyr, and eek the lond
In certeyn boundes, that they may not flee:
That same prynce and moevere eek," quod he,
" Hath stabled, in this wrecched world adoun,
Certeyn dayes and duracioun
To alle that er engendrid in this place,
Over the which day they may nat pace,
Al mowe they yit wel here dayes abregge;
Ther needeth non auctorité tallegge;
For it is preved by experience,
But that me lust declare my sentence.
Than may men wel by this ordre discerne,
That thilke moevere stabul is and eterne.
Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool,
That every partye dyryveth from his hool.
For nature hath nat take his bygynnyng
Of no partye ne cantel of a thing,
But of a thing that parfyt is and stable,
Descendyng so, til it be corumpable.
And therfore of his wyse purveaunce
He hath so wel biset his ordenaunce,
That spices of thinges and progressiouns
Schullen endure by successiouns,
And nat eterne be withoute lye:
This maistow understand and se at ye.
" Lo the ook, that hath so long norisschyng

3000

3010

3019.—*Lo the ook.* From the Teseide,—

Li querci, che anno si lungo nutrimento
E tanta vita quanto noi vedemo,
Anno pur alcun tempo finimento.
Le dure pietre ancor, etc.

Fro tyme that it gynneth first to spring,
And hath so long a lyf, as we may see,
Yet atte laste wasted is the tree.
" Considereth eek, how that the harde stoon
Under oure foot, on which we trede and goon,
Yit wasteth it, as it lith by the weye.
The brode ryver som tyme wexeth dreye.
The grete townes see we wane and wende.
Than may I see that al thing hath an ende.
" Of man and womman se we wel also,
That wendeth in oon of this termes two,
That is to seyn, in youthe or elles in age,
He moot ben deed, the kyng as schal a page;
Sum in his bed, som in the deepe see,
Som in the large feeld, as men may se.
Ther helpeth naught, al goth thilke weye:
Thanne may I see wel that al thing schal deye.
What maketh this but Jubiter the kyng?
The which is prynce and cause of alle thing,
Convertyng al unto his propre wille,
From which he is dereyned, soth to telle.
And here agayn no creature on lyve
Of no degré avayleth for to stryve.
" Than is it wisdom, as thenketh me,
To maken vertu of necessité,
And take it wel, that we may nat eschewe,
And namely that that to us alle is dewe.
And who so gruccheth aught, he doth folye,
And rebel is to him that al may gye.

And certeynly a man hath most honour
To deyen in his excellence and flour,
Whan he is siker of his goode name.
Than hath he doon his freend, ne him, no schame.
And glader ought his freend ben of his deth,
Whan with honour is yolden up the breth,
Thanne whan his name appelled is for age;
For al forgeten is his vasselage.
Thanne is it best, as for a worthi fame,
To dye whan a man is best of name.
The contrary of al this is wilfulnesse.
Why grucchen we? why have we hevynesse,
That good Arcyte, of chyvalry the flour,
Departed is, with worschip and honour,
Out of this foule prisoun of this lyf?
Why gruccheth heer his cosyn and his wyf
Of his welfare, that loven him so wel?
Can he hem thank? nay, God woot, never a del,
That bothe his soule and eek hemself offende,
And yet they may here lustes nat amende.
"What may I conclude of this longe serye,
But aftir wo I rede us to be merye,
And thanke Jubiter of al his grace.
And or that we departe fro this place,
I rede that we make, of sorwes two,
O parfyt joye lastyng ever mo:
And loketh now wher most sorwe is her-inne,
Ther wol we first amenden and bygynne.
"Sustyr," quod he, "this is my ful assent,

With al thavys heer of my parlement,
That gentil Palamon, your owne knight,
That serveth yow with herte, will, and might,
And ever hath doon, syn fyrst tyme ye him knewe,
That ye schul of your grace upon him rewe,
And take him for your housbond and for lord:
Lene me youre hand, for this is oure acord.
Let see now of your wommanly pité.
He is a kynges brothir sone, pardee;
And though he were a pore bachiller,
Syn he hath served you so many a yeer,
And had for you so gret adversité,
It moste be considered, trusteth me.
For gentil mercy aughte passe right."
Than seyde he thus to Palamon ful right;
"I trowe ther needeth litel sermonyng
To make you assente to this thing.
Com neer, and tak your lady by the hond."
Bitwix hem was i-maad anon the bond,
That highte matrimoyn or mariage,
By alle the counseil of the baronage.
And thus with blys and eek with melodye
Hath Palamon i-wedded Emelye.
And God that al this wyde world hath wrought,
Send him his love, that hath it deere i-bought.
For now is Palamon in al his wele,
Lyvynge in blisse, richesse, and in hele,
And Emelye him loveth so tendirly,
And he hir serveth al so gentilly,

That never was ther wordes hem bitweene
Of jelousy, ne of non othir tene.
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye;
And God save al this fayre companye!

THE PROLOGE OF THE MYLLER.

Whan that the Knight had thus his tale i-told,
In al the route nas ther yong ne old,
That he ne seyde it was a noble story,
And worthi to be drawen to memory;
And namely the gentils everichoon.
Our Host tho lowh and swoor, "So moot I goon,
This goth right wel; unbokeled is the male;
Let se now who schal telle another tale:
For trewely this game is wel bygonne.
Now telleth ye, sir Monk, if that ye konne
Som what, to quyte with the knightes tale."
The Myller that for-drunken was al pale,
So that unnethe upon his hors he sat,
He wold avale nowther hood ne hat,
Ne abyde no man for his curtesye,
But in Pilates voys he gan to crye,
And swor by armes and by blood and bones,
"I can a noble tale for the noones,
With which I wol now quyte the knightes tale."
Oure Hoost saugh wel how dronke he was of ale,
And seyde, "Robyn, abyde, my leve brother,

3126.—*Pilates voys.* Pilate was probably represented in the popular Mysteries speaking in a gruff loud voice, as one in power and authority.

Som bettre man schal telle first another:
Abyd, and let us worken thriftyly."
"By Goddes soule!" quod he, "that wol nat I,
For I wol speke, or elles go my way."
Oure Host answerd, "Tel on, a devel way!
Thou art a fool; thy witt is overcome."
"Now herkneth," quod this Myller, "al and some
But first I make a protestacioun,
That I am dronke, I knowe wel by my soun:
And therfore if that I mys-speke or seye,
Wyte it the ale of Southwerk, I you preye:
For I wol telle a legende and a lyf
Bothe of a carpenter and of his wyf,
How that the clerk hath set the wrightes cappe."
The Reve answered and seyde, "Stynt thi clappe.
Let be thy lewed drunken harlottrye.
It is a synne, and eek a greet folye
To apeyren eny man, or him defame,
And eek to brynge wyves in ylle name.
Thou mayst ynowgh of other thinges seyn."
This dronken Miller spak ful sone ageyn,
And seyde, "Leeve brother Osewold,
Who hath no wyf, he is no cokewold.
But I seye not therfore that thou art oon,
Ther been ful goode wyves many oon.
And ever a thousand goode agayns oon badde;

3156.—The two next lines are omitted in Tyrwhitt's text. I have not reckoned them in the numbering, from the wish to preserve the numbering of the lines as in Tyrwhitt's Chaucer.

That knowest thou wel thyself, but if thou madde.
Why art thou angry with my tale now?
I have a wyf, pardé! as wel as thow,
Yet nolde I, for the oxen in my plough,
Take upon me more than ynough:
Though that thou deme thiself that thou be oon,
I wol bileeve wel that I am noon.
An housbond schal not be inquisityf
Of Goddes pryveté, ne of his wyf.
So that he may fynde Goddes foysoun there,
Of the remenaunt needeth nought enquere."
What schuld I seye, but that this proud Myllere
He nolde his wordes for no man forbere,
But tolde his cherlisch tale in his manere,
Me athinketh, that I schal reherce it heere.
And therfor every gentil wight I preye,
For Goddes love, as deme nat that I seye,
Of yvel entent, but for I moot reherse
Here wordes alle, al be they better or werse,
Or elles falsen som of my mateere.
And therfor who so list it nat to heere,
Turne over the leef, and cheese another tale;
For he schal fynde ynowe bothe gret and smale,
Of storial thing that toucheth gentilesse,
And eek moralité, and holynesse.
Blameth nat me, if that ye cheese amys.
The Miller is a cherl, ye know wel this;
So was the Reeve, and othir many mo,
And harlotry they tolden bothe two.

Avyseth you, and put me out of blame;
And men schulde nat make ernest of game.

THE MILLERES TALE.

WHILOM ther was dwellyng at Oxenford
A riche gnof, that gestes heeld to boorde,
And of his craft he was a carpenter.
With him ther was dwellyng a pore scoler,
Had lerned art, but al his fantasye
Was torned for to lerne astrologye,
And cowde a certeyn of conclusiouns
To deme by interrogaciouns,
If that men axed him in certeyn houres,
Whan that men schuld han drought or ellys schoures:
Or if men axed him what schulde bifalle
Of every thing, I may nought reken hem alle.
This clerk was cleped heende Nicholas;
Of derne love he cowde and of solas;
And therwith he was sleigh and ful privé,
And lik a mayden meke for to se.
A chambir had he in that hostillerye
Alone, withouten eny compaignye,
Ful fetisly i-dight with herbes soote,

The Milleres Tale.—I have not met with this story elsewhere than in Chaucer, though it is more than probable that he took it from an older French fabliau, which is now lost or only preserved in some inedited and little known MS.

3203.—*that.* The MS. Harl. reads *in his hostillerye.* It may be observed that it was usual in the university for two or more students to have one room.

And he himself as swete as is the roote
Of lokorys, or eny cetewale.
His almagest, and bookes gret and smale,
His astrylabe, longyng for his art,
His augrym stoones, leyen faire apart
On schelves couched at his beddes heed,
His presse i-covered with a faldyng reed.
And al above ther lay a gay sawtrye,
On which he made a-nightes melodye,
So swetely, that al the chambur rang:
And *Angelus ad virginem* he sang.
And after that he sang the kynges note;
Ful often blissed was his mery throte.
And thus this sweete clerk his tyme spente,
After his frendes fyndyng and his rente.
This carpenter had weddid newe a wyf,
Which that he loved more than his lyf:
Of eyghteteene yeer sche was of age.
Gelous he was, and heeld hir narwe in cage,
For sche was wild and yong, and he was old,
And demed himself belik a cokewold,

3208.—*almagest*. This book, the work of Ptolemy, derived through the Arabs, was the canon of astrological science among our forefathers in the middle ages.

3209.—*astrylabe*. The astrolabe was the chief instrument for making astronomical calculations.

3210.—*augrym stoones*. Augrim signifies arithmetic,—it is not very certain what *augrim stones* were, but they were probably counters marked with numerals, and used for calculating on a sort of abacus. Counters for reckoning with, are mentioned in Shakespeare.

3216. *Angelus ad virginem*. One of the hymns of the church service. It is more difficult to say what was the *kynges note*, in the next line.

He knew nat Catoun, for his wit was rude,
That bad man schulde wedde his similitude.
Men schulde wedde aftir here astaat,
For eelde and youthe ben often at debaat.
But syn that he was brought into the snare,
He moste endure, as othere doon, his care.

Fair was the yonge wyf, and therwithal
As eny wesil hir body gent and smal.
A seynt sche wered, barred al of silk ;
A barm-cloth eek as whit as morne mylk
Upon hir lendes, ful of many a gore.
Whit was hir smok, and browdid al byfore
And eek byhynde on hir coler aboute
Of cole-blak silk, withinne and eek withoute.
The tapes of hir white voluper
Weren of the same sute of hire coler;
Hir filet brood of silk y-set ful heye.
And certeynly sche hadd a licorous eyghe :
Ful smal y-pulled weren hir browes two,
And tho were bent, as blak as a slo.
Sche was wel more blisful on to see
Than is the newe perjonette tree ;
And softer than the wol is of a wethir.
And by hir gurdil hyng a purs of lethir,

3227.—*Catoun.* Chaucer alludes to the treatise of Cato *de Moribus ;* but the sentiment is not taken from that book, but from a medieval poem of a similar character entitled *Facetus*, which contains the following lines :

Duc tibi prole parem sponsam moresque venustam,
Si cum pace velis vitam deducere justam.

Tassid with silk, and perled with latoun.
In al this world to seken up and doun
Ther nys no man so wys, that couthe thenche
So gay a popillot, or such a wenche.
For brighter was the schynyng of hir hewe,
Than in the Tour the noble i-forged newe.
But of hir song, it was as lowde and yerne
As eny swalwe chiteryng on a berne.
Therto sche cowde skippe, and make game,
As eny kyde or calf folwyng his dame.
Hir mouth was sweete as bragat is or meth,
Or hoord of apples, layd in hay or heth.
Wynsyng sche was, as is a joly colt,
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.
A broch sche bar upon hir loue coleer,
As brod as is the bos of a bocleer.
Hir schos were laced on hir legges heyghe;
Sche was a primerole, a piggesneyghe,
For eny lord have liggyng in his bedde,
Or yet for eny good yeman to wedde.
Now sir, and eft sir, so bifel the cas,
That on a day this heende Nicholas
Fil with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye,

3255.—*schynyng*. The MS. Harl. reads *smylyng*, contrary to the other MSS. that I have examined.

3256.—*noble*. The gold noble of this period was a very beautiful coin. Specimens are engraved in Ruding's Annals of the Coinage. It was coined in the Tower of London, the place of the principal London mint.

Whil that hir housbond was at Oseneye,
As clerkes ben ful sotil and ful queynte.
And pryvely he caught hir by the queynte,
And seyde; "I-wis, but if I have my wille,
For derne love of the, lemman, I spille."
And heeld hir harde by the haunche boones,
And seyde, "Lemman, love me al at ones,
Or I wol dye, as wisly God me save."
And sche sprang out as doth a colt in trave:
And with hir heed sche wried fast awey,
And seyde, "I wol nat kisse the, by my fey!
Why let be," quod sche, "lat be thou, Nicholas,
Or I wol crye out harrow and allas!
Do wey your handes for your curtesye!"
This Nicholas gan mercy for to crye,
And spak so faire, and profred him so faste,
That sche hir love him graunted atte laste,
And swor hir oth by seynt Thomas of Kent,
That sche wol be at his comaundement,
Whan that sche may hir leysir wel aspye.
"Myn housbond is so ful of jelousie,
That but ye wayten wel, and be pryvé,
I woot right wel I am but deed," quod sche:
"Ye mosten be ful derne as in this caas."
"Therof ne care the nought," quod Nicholas:
"A clerk hath litherly byset his while,

3274.—*Oseneye.* The somewhat celebrated abbey of Oseney stood in the suburbs of Oxford.

But if he cowde a carpenter bygyle." 3300
And thus they ben acorded and i-sworn
To wayte a tyme, as I have told biforn.
Whan Nicholas had doon thus every del,
And thakked hire aboute the lendys wel,
He kist hir sweet, and taketh his sawtrye,
And pleyeth fast, and maketh melodye.
Than fyl it thus, that to the parisch chirche
Cristes owen werkes for to wirche,
This goode wyf went on an haly day:
Hir forheed schon as bright as eny day, 3310
So was it waisschen, whan sche leet hir werk.
Now ther was of that chirche a parisch clerk,
The which that was i-cleped Absolon.
Crulle was his heer, and as the gold it schon,
And strowted as a fan right large and brood;
Ful streyt and evene lay his jolly schood.
His rode was reed, his eyghen gray as goos,
With Powles wyndowes corven on his schoos.

3318.—*Powles wyndowes.* The three accompanying figures, taken from the paintings formerly existing on the walls of St. Stephen's Chapel, Westminster, represent shoes of Chaucer's time, which are cut in patterns not unlike the tracery of church windows. Mr. C. Roach Smith has in his interesting museum

some beautiful samples of shoes cut in this manner, more elaborate even than these cuts. It has been conjectured that the phrase *Powles wyndowes*, refers more especially to the rose window of old St. Paul's Ca-

In hosen reed he went ful fetusly.
I-clad he was ful smal and propurly,
Al in a kirtel of a fyn wachet;
Schapen with goores in the newe get.
And therupon he had a gay surplys,
As whyt as is the blosme upon the rys.
A mery child he was, so God me save;
Wel couthe he lete blood, and clippe and schave,
And make a chartre of lond and acqitaunce.
In twenty maners he coude skip and daunce,
After the scole of Oxenforde tho,
And with his legges casten to and fro;
And pleyen songes on a small rubible;
Ther-to he sang som tyme a lowde quynyble.
And as wel coude he pleye on a giterne.
In al the toun nas brewhous ne taverne,
That he ne visited with his solas,
Ther as that any gaylard tapster was.
But soth to say he was somdel squaymous
Of fartyng, and of speche daungerous.
This Absolon, that joly was and gay,

---

thedral, which resembled the ornament in the cut to the right. Warton, Hist. E. P. ii, 194, says that *calcei fenestrati* occur in ancient injunctions to the clergy. Chaucer, in the Romaunt of the Rose, speaks of Mirth as,—

Shod, with grete maistrie,
With shone decopid and with lace.

It may be observed, however, that this is a literal translation from the French original, *decoupé*.

3322.—Instead of this line, Tyrwhitt reads,—

Ful faire and thicke ben the pointes set.

Goth with a senser on the haly day,
Sensing the wyves of the parisch fast;
And many a lovely look on hem he cast,
And namely on this carpenteres wyf:
To loke on hire him thought a mery lyf,
Sche was so propre, sweete, and licorous.
I dar wel sayn, if sche had ben a mous,
And he a cat, he wold hir hent anoon.
This parisch clerk, this joly Absolon,
Hath in his herte such a love longyng,
That of no wyf ne took he noon offryng;
For curtesy, he seyde, he wolde noon.
The moone at night ful cleer and brighte schoon,
And Absolon his giterne hath i-take,
For paramours he seyde he wold awake.
And forth he goth, jolyf and amerous,
Til he cam to the carpenteres hous,
A litel after the cok had y-crowe,
And dressed him up by a schot wyndowe,
That was under the carpenteres wal.
He syngeth in his voys gentil and smal;
"Now deere lady, if thi wille be,
I praye yow that ye wol rewe on me,"

3358.—*schot wyndowe.* I am not satisfied with the explanations of this term hitherto given. It would seem rather to mean a window projecting from the wall, from which the inmates might shoot upon any one who attempted to force an entry into the house by the door, and from which therefore it would be easy for a person within to expose any part of his body in the manner expressed in the sequel of the story.

3361.—Tyrwhitt observes that this and the following line, comprising Absolon's song, appear to consist of four short lines, all rhyming together.

Ful wel acordyng to his gyternyng.
This carpenter awook, and herde him syng,
And spak unto his wyf, and sayde anoon,
"What, Alisoun, herestow not Absolon,
That chaunteth thus under oure boure smal?"
And sche answerd hir housbond therwithal;
"Yis, God woot, Johan, I heere it every del."
This passeth forth; what wil ye bet than wel?
Fro day to day this joly Absolon
So woweth hire, that him is wo-bigon.
He waketh al the night, and al the day,
To kembe his lokkes brode, and made him gay.
He woweth hire by mene, and by brocage,
And swor he wolde ben hir owne page.
He syngeth crowyng as a nightyngale;
And sent hire pyment, meth, and spiced ale,
And wafres pypyng hoot out of the gleede:
And for sche was of toune, he profred meede.
For som folk wol be wonne for richesse,
And som for strokes, som for gentillesse.
Som tyme, to schewe his lightnes and maistrye,
He pleyeth Herod on a scaffold hye.

3367.—*smal.* Tyrwhitt, with some MSS., reads *boures wal.*

3377.—*crowyng.* Some MSS., with Tyrwhitt, have *brokking.*

3378.—*pyment.* Piment was a kind of spiced wine. Tyrwhitt's reading, *pinnes*, is certainly much inferior to the one in the text

3384.—*pleyeth Herod.* Herod was a favourite part in the religious plays, and was perhaps an object of competition among the performers, and a part in which the actor endeavoured to shew himself off with advantage. Every reader knows Shakespeare's phrase of *outheroding Herod.*

But what avayleth him as in this caas?
Sche so loveth this heende Nicholas,
That Absolon may blowe the bukkes horn:
He ne had for al his labour but a skorn.
And thus sche maketh Absolon hir ape,
And al his ernest torneth to a jape.
Ful soth is this proverbe, it is no lye;
Men seyn right thus alway, the ney slye
Maketh the ferre leef to be loth.
For though that Absolon be wood or wroth,
Bycause that he fer was from here sight,
This Nicholas hath stonden in his light.
Now bere the wel, thou heende Nicholas,
For Absolon may wayle and synge allas.
And so bifelle it on a Satyrday,
This carpenter was gon to Osenay,
And heende Nicholas and Alisoun
Acordid ben to this conclusioun,
That Nicholas schal schapen hem a wyle
This sely jelous housbond to begyle;
And if so were this game wente aright,
Sche schulde slepe in his arm al night,
For this was hire desir and his also.

3387.—*blowe the bukkes horn.* I presume this was a service that generally went unrewarded.

3391.—*this proverbe.* The same proverb is found in Gower (Conf. Amant. lib. iii, f. 58),—

An olde sawe is: who that is slygh
In place wher he may be nyghe,
He maketh the ferre leef loth.

And right anoon, withouten wordes mo,
This Nicholas no lenger wold he tarye,
But doth ful softe into his chambur carye
Bothe mete and drynke for a day or tweye.
And to hir housbond bad hir for to seye,
If that he axed after Nicholas,
Sche schulde seye, sche wiste nat wher he was;
Of al that day sche saw him nat with eye;
Sche trowed he were falle in som maladye,
For no cry that hir mayden cowde him calle
He nolde answere, for nought that may bifalle.
Thus passeth forth al that ilke Satyrday,
That Nicholas stille in his chambre lay,
And eet, and drank, and dede what him leste
Til Soneday the sonne was gon to reste.
This sely carpenter hath gret mervaile
Of Nicholas, or what thing may him ayle,
And seyde, "I am adrad, by seynt Thomas!
It stondeth nat aright with Nicholas:
God schilde that he deyde sodeinly.
This world is now ful tykel sikerly;
I saugh to day a corps y-born to chirche,
That now on Monday last I saugh him wirche.
Go up," quod he unto his knave, "anoon;
Clepe at his dore, or knokke with a stoon:
Loke how it is, and telle me boldely."
This knave goth him up ful sturdily,
And at the chambir dore whil he stood,
He cryed and knokked as that he were wood:

"What how? what do ye, mayster Nicholay?
How may ye slepen al this longe day?"
But al for nought, he herde nat o word.
An hole he fond right lowe upon the boord,
Ther as the cat was wont in for to creepe,
And at that hole he loked in ful deepe,
And atte laste he hadde of him a sight.
This Nicholas sat ever gapyng upright,
As he had loked on the newe moone.
Adoun he goth, and tolde his mayster soone,
In what aray he sawh this ilke man.
This carpenter to blessen him bygan,
And seyde, "Now help us, seynte Frideswyde.
A man woot litel what him schal betyde.
This man is falle with his astronomye
In som woodnesse, or in som agonye.
I thought ay wel how that it schulde be.
Men schulde nought knowe of Goddes pryvyté.
Ye, blessed be alwey a lewed man,
That nat but oonly his bileeve can.
So ferde another clerk with astronomye;
He walked in the feeldes for to prye
Upon the sterres, what ther schulde bifalle,
Til he was in a marle pit i-falle.
He saugh nat that. But yet, by seint Thomas!

3449.—*seynte Frideswyde.* This saint was appropriately invoked by the carpenter, as she was the patron of a rich monastic house at Oxford.

3460.—*in a marle pit.* This tale, told of Thales by Plato, was very popular in the middle ages, and is found under different forms in a variety of collections of stories.

Me reweth sore for heende Nicholas:
He schal be ratyd of his studyyng,
If that I may, by Jhesu heven kyng!
Gete me a staf, that I may underspore,
Whil that thou, Robyn, hevest up the dore:
He schal out of his studyyng, as I gesse."
And to the chambir dore he gan him dresse.
His knave was a strong karl for the noones,
And by the hasp he haf it up at oones;
And in the floor the dore fil doun anoon.
This Nicholas sat stille as eny stoon,
And ever he gapyd up-ward to the eyr.
This carpenter wende he were in despeir,
And hent him by the schuldres mightily,
And schook him harde, and cryed spitously;
"What, Nicholas? what how man? loke adoun:
Awake, and thynk on Cristes passioun.
I crowche the from elves, and from wightes.
Therwith the night-spel seyde he anon rightes,
On the foure halves of the hous aboute,
And on the threisshfold of the dore withoute.
Lord Jhesu Crist, and seynte Benedight,
Blesse this hous from every wikkede wight,
Fro nyghtes verray, the white Pater-noster;
Wher wonestow now, seynte Petres soster?"
And atte laste, heende Nicholas
Gan for to syke sore, and seyde; "Allas!

3470 3480

3485. *verray*. This is the reading of the MSS. I have consulted. Tyrwhitt reads *mare*, which is perhaps right.

Schal al the world be lost eftsones now?"
This carpenter answerde, "What seystow?
What? thenk on God, as we doon, men that swinke."
This Nicholas answerde, "Fette me drynke;
And after wol I speke in pryvyté
Of certeyn thing that toucheth the and me:
I wol telle it non other man certayn."
This carpenter goth forth, and comth agayn,
And brought of mighty ale a large quart.
Whan ech of hem y-dronken had his part,
This Nicholas his dore gan to schitte,
And dede this carpenter doun by him sitte,
And seide, "Johan, myn host ful leve and deere,
Thou schalt upon thy trouthe swere me heere,
That to no wight thou schalt this counsel wreye:
For it is Cristes counsel that I seye,
And if thou telle it man, thou art forlore:
For this vengaunce thou schalt han therfore,
That if thou wreye me, thou schalt be wood."
"Nay, Crist forbede it for his holy blood!"
Quod tho this sely man, "I am no labbe,
Though I it say, I am nought leef to gabbe.
Say what thou wolt, I schal it never telle
To child ne wyf, by him that harwed helle!"
"Now, Johan," quod Nicholas, "I wol not lye,
I have i-founde in myn astrologye,
As I have loked in the moone bright,

3512.—*him that harwed helle.* Our Saviour. The harrowing of hell was a very popular legend among our forefathers, and found a place in most of the collections of mysteries, from which representations the lower orders obtained their notions of scripture history and theology.

That now on Monday next, at quarter night,
Schal falle a reyn, and that so wilde and wood,
That half so gret was never Noes flood.
This world," he seyde, "more than an hour
Schal ben i-dreynt, so hidous is the schour:
Thus schal mankynde drenche, and leese his lyf."
This carpenter answered, "Allas, my wyf!
And schal sche drenche? allas, myn Alisoun!"
For sorwe of this he fel almost adoun,
And seyde, "Is ther no remedy in this caas?"
"Why yis, for Gode," quod heende Nicholas:
"If thou wolt werken aftir lore and reed;
Thou maist nought worke after thin owen heed.
For thus seith Salomon, that was ful trewe,
Werke by counseil, and thou schalt nat rewe.
And if thou worken wolt by good counsail,
I undertake, withouten mast and sail,
Yet schal I saven hir, and the and me.
Hastow nat herd how saved was Noe,
Whan that our Lord had warned him biforn,
That al the world with watir schulde be lorn?"
"Yis," quod this carpenter, "ful yore ago."
"Hastow nought herd," quod Nicholas, "also
The sorwe of Noe with his felaschipe,
That he hadde or he gat his wyf to schipe?

3540 —*his wyf*. According to a medieval legend, Noah's wife was unwilling to go into the ark, and the quarrel between her and her husband makes a prominent part of the play of Noah's flood, in the Chester and Towneley Mysteries.

Him hadde wel lever, I dar wel undertake,
At thilke tyme, than alle his wetheres blake,
That sche hadde had a schip hirself allone.
And therfore wostow what is best to doone?
This axeth hast, and of an hasty thing
Men may nought preche or make taryyng.
Anon go gete us fast into this in
A knedyng trowh or elles a kemelyn,
For ech of us; but loke that they be large,
In which that we may rowe as in a barge:
And have therin vitaille suffisant
But for o day; fy on the remenant;
The water schal aslake and gon away
Aboute prime uppon the nexte day.
But Robyn may not wite of this, thy knave,
Ne ek thy mayde Gille I may not save:
Aske nought why: for though thou aske me,
I wol nat tellen Goddes pryveté.
Sufficeth the, but if that thy witt madde,
To have as gret a grace as Noe hadde.
Thy wyf schal I wel saven out of doute.
Go now thy wey, and speed the heer aboute.
And whan thou hast for hir, and the, and me,
I-goten us this knedyng tubbes thre,
Than schalt thou hange hem in the roof ful hie,
That no man of oure purveaunce aspye:
And whan thou thus hast doon as I have seyd,
And hast oure vitaille faire in hem y-leyd,
And eek an ax to smyte the corde a-two

Whan that the water cometh, that we may goo,
And breke an hole an hye upon the gable
Into the gardyn-ward, over the stable,
That we may frely passen forth oure way,
Whan that the grete schour is gon away;
Than schaltow swymme as mery, I undertake,
As doth the white doke aftir hir drake:
Than wol I clepe, How Alisoun, how Jon,
Beoth merye: for the flood passeth anon.
And thou wolt seye, Heyl, maister Nicholay,
Good morn, I see the wel, for it is day.
And than schul we be lordes al oure lyf
Of al the world, as Noe and his wyf.
But of oo thing I warne the ful right,
Be wel avysed of that ilke nyght,
That we ben entred into schippes boord,
That non of us ne speke not a word,
Ne clepe ne crye, but be in his preyere,
For it is Goddes owne heste deere.
Thy wyf and thou most hangen fer a-twynne,
For that bitwixe you schal be no synne,
No more in lokyng than ther schal in dede.
This ordynaunce is seyd; so God me speede.
To morwe at night, whan men ben aslepe,
Into our knedyng tubbes wol we crepe,
And sitte ther, abydyng Goddes grace.
Go now thy way, I have no lenger space

3577.—*Jon.* See, further on, the note on l. 4011.

To make of this no lenger sermonyng;
Men seyn thus: send the wyse, and sey no thing:
Thou art so wys, it needeth nat the teche.
Go, save oure lyf, and that I the byseche."
This seely carpenter goth forth his way,
Ful ofte he seyd, "allas, and weylaway!"
And to his wyf he told his pryveté,
And sche was war, and knew it bet than he,
What al this queinte cast was for to seye.
But natheles sche ferd as sche schuld deye,
And seyde, "Allas! go forth thy way anoon,
Help us to skape, or we be ded echon.
I am thy verray trewe wedded wyf;
Go, deere spouse, and help to save oure lyf."
Lo, which a gret thing is affeccioun!
A man may dye for ymaginacioun,
So deepe may impressioun be take.
This seely carpenter bygynneth quake:
Him thenketh verrayly that he may se
Noes flood come walking as the see
To drenchen Alisoun, his hony deere.
He weepeth, wayleth, maketh sory cheere:
He siketh, with ful many a sory swough,
And goth, and geteth him a knedyng trough,
And after that a tubbe, and a kymelyn,
And pryvely he sent hem to his in:
And heng hem in the roof in pryveté.
His owne hond than made laddres thre,
To clymben by the ronges and the stalkes

Unto the tubbes hangyng in the balkes;
And hem vitayled, bothe trough and tubbe,
With breed and cheese, with good ale in a jubbe,
Suffisyng right ynough as for a day.
But or that he had maad al this array,
He sent his knave and eek his wenche also
Upon his neede to Londone for to go.
And on the Monday, whan it drew to nyght,
He schette his dore, withouten candel light,
And dressed al this thing as it schuld be.
And schortly up they clumben alle thre.
They seten stille wel a forlong way:
"Now, *Pater Noster*, clum," quod Nicholay,
And "clum," quod Jon, and "clum," quod Alisoun.
This carpenter seyd his devocioun,
And stille he sitt, and byddeth his prayere,
Ay waytyng on the reyn, if he it heere.
The deede sleep, for verray busynesse,
Fil on this carpenter, right as I gesse,
Abowten courfew tyme, or litel more.
For travail of his goost he groneth sore,
And eft he routeth, for his heed myslay.
Doun of the laddir stalketh Nicholay,
And Alisoun ful softe adoun hir spedde.
Withouten wordes mo they goon to bedde,
Ther as the carpenter was wont to lye;
Ther was the revel, and the melodye.
And thus lith Alisoun and Nicholas,
In busynesse of myrthe and of solas,

Til that the belles of laudes gan to rynge,
And freres in the chauncel gan to synge.
This parissch clerk, this amerous Absolon,
That is for love so harde and woo bygon,
Upon the Monday was at Osenay
With company, him to desporte and play;
And axed upon caas a cloysterer
Ful pryvely after the carpenter;
And he drough him apart out of the chirche,
And sayde, "Nay, I say him nat here wirche
Syn Satirday; I trow that he be went
For tymber, ther our abbot hath him sent.
For he is wont for tymber for to goo,
And dwellen at the Graunge a day or tuo.
Or elles he is at his hous certayn.
Wher that he be, I can nat sothly sayn."
This Absolon ful joly was and light,
And thoughte, "Now is tyme wake al night,
For sikerly I sawh him nought styryng
Aboute his dore, syn day bigan to spryng.
So mote I thryve, I schal at cokkes crowe
Ful pryvely go knokke at his wyndowe,

3655.—*belles of laudes.* The service of Laudes or Matins began at three o'clock in the morning. The bell was naturally rung a little before, and perhaps began at half-past two.

3668.—*the Graunge.* The abbeys had generally large granges attached to their more considerable estates, erected with so much strength that many of them have outlived the monasteries themselves. The distance of some of the estates from the abbey would naturally oblige those who went on business to stay a day or two away.

That stant ful lowe upon his bowres wal:
To Alisoun than wol I tellen al
My love-longyng; for yet I schal not mysse
That atte leste wey I schal hir kisse.
Som maner comfort schal I have, parfay!
My mouth hath icched al this longe day:
That is a signe of kissyng atte leste.
Al nyght I mette eek I was at a feste.
Therfore I wol go slepe an hour or tweye,
And al the night than wol I wake and pleye."
Whan that the firste cok hath crowe, anoon
Up ryst this jolyf lover Absolon,
And him arrayeth gay, at poynt devys.
But first he cheweth greyn and lycoris,
To smellen swete, or he hadde kempt his heere.
Under his tunge a trewe love he beere,
For therby wende he to be gracious.
He rometh to the carpenteres hous,
And stille he stant under the schot wyndowe;
Unto his brest it raught, it was so lowe;
And softe he cowhith with a semysoun:
"What do ye, honycomb, swete Alisoun?
My fayre bryd, my swete cynamome,
Awake, lemman myn, and speketh to me.
Ful litel thynke ye upon my wo,
That for youre love I swelte ther I go.

3690.—*greyn*. Grains of Paris, or Paradise, a favourite spice at this period.

No wonder is if that I swelte and swete,
I morne as doth a lamb after the tete.
I-wis, lemman, I have such love-longyng,
That like a turtil trewe is my moornyng.
I may not ete more than a mayde."
"Go fro the wyndow, jakke fool," sche sayde:
"As help me God, it wol not be, compame.
I love another, and elles were I to blame,
Wel bet than the, by Jhesu, Absolon.
Go forth thy wey, or I wol cast a stoon;
And lete me slepe, a twenty devel way!"
"Allas!" quod Absolon, "and weylaway!
That trewe love was ever so ylle bysett:
Thanne kisseth me, syn it may be no bett,
For Jesus love, and for the love of me."
"Wilt thou than go thy wey therwith?" quod sche.
"Ye, certes, lemman," quod this Absolon.
"Than mak the redy," quod sche, "I come anon."
This Absolon doun sette him on his knees,
And seide, "I am a lord at alle degrees:
For after this I hope ther cometh more;
Lemman, thy grace, and, swete bryd, thyn ore."
The wyndow sche undyd, and that in hast:
"Have doon," quod sche, "com of, and speed the fast,
Lest that our neyghebours the aspye."
This Absolon gan wipe his mouth ful drye.
Derk was the night, as picche or as a cole,
Out atte wyndow putte sche hir hole;
And Absolon him fel no bet ne wers,

But with his mouth he kist hir naked ers
Ful savorly. Whan he was war of this,
Abak he sterte, and thought it was amys,
For wel he wist a womman hath no berd.
He felt a thing al rough and long i-herd,
And seyde, "Fy, allas! what have I do?"
"Te-hee!" quod sche, and clapt the wyndow to;
And Absolon goth forth a sory paas.
"A berd, a berd!" quod heende Nicholas;
"By goddes corps, this game goth fair and wel."
This seely Absolon herd every del,
And on his lippe he gan for angir byte;
And to himself he seyde, "I schal the quyte."
Who rubbith now, who froteth now his lippes
With dust, with sand, with straw, with cloth, with chippes,
But Absolon? that seith ful ofte, "allas;
My soule bytake I unto Sathanas!
But me were lever than alle this toun," quod he,
"Of this dispit awroken for to be.
Allas!" quod he, "allas! I nadde bleynt!"
His hoote love was cold, and al i-queint.
For fro that tyme that he had kist her ers,
Of paramours ne sette he nat a kers,
For he was helyd of his maledye;
Ful ofte paramours he gan deffye,
And wept as doth a child that is i-bete.
A softe paas went he over the strete
Unto a smyth, men clepith daun Gerveys,
That in his forge smythed plowh-harneys;

He scharpeth schar and cultre bysily.
This Absolon knokketh al esily,
And seyde, "Undo, Gervays, and that anoon."
"What, who art thou?" "It am I Absolon."
"What? Absolon, what? Cristes swete tree!
Why ryse ye so rathe? *benedicite*,
What eyleth you? some gay gurl, God it woot,
Hath brought you thus upon the verytrot;
By seinte Noet! ye wot wel what I mene."
This Absolon ne roughte nat a bene
Of al his pleye; no word agayn he gaf;
For he hadde more tow on his distaf
Than Gerveys knew, and seyde,—"Freend so deere,
That hote cultre in the chymney heere
As lene it me, I have therwith to doone:
I wol it bring agayn to the ful soone."
Gerveys answerde, "Certes, were it gold,
Or in a poke nobles al untold,
Ye schul him have, as I am trewe smyth.
Ey, Cristes fote! what wil ye do therwith?"
"Therof," quod Absolon, "be as be may;
I schal wel telle it the to morwe day:"

3767.—*gay gurl.* This appears to have been a common phrase for a young woman of light manners. In the time of Henry VIII, the lady Anne Berkeley, dissatisfied with the conduct of her daughter-in law, lady Catherine Howard, is reported to have said of her: "By God's blessed sacrament, this *gay girle* will beggar my son Henry!"

3769.—*seinte Noet.* St. Neot.

3772.—*tow on his distaf.* This seems to have been a common proverb of the time. Tyrwhitt quotes from Froissart, "Il aura en bref temps autres estoupes en sa quenille."

And caughte the cultre by the colde stele.
Ful soft out at the dore he gan it stele,
And wente unto the carpenteres wal.
He cowheth first, and knokketh therwithal
Upon the wyndow, right as he dede er.
This Alisoun answerde, "Who is ther
That knokkest so? I warant it a theef."
"Why nay," quod he, "God woot, my sweete leef,
I am thyn Absolon, o my derlyng.
Of gold," quod he, "I have the brought a ryng,
My mooder gaf it me, so God me save!
Ful fyn it is, and therto wel i-grave:
This wol I give the, if thou me kisse."
This Nicholas was rise for to pysse,
And thought he wold amenden al the jape,
He schulde kisse his ers or that he skape:
And up the wyndow dyde he hastily,
And out his ers putteth he pryvely
Over the buttok, to the haunche bon.
And therwith spak this clerk, this Absolon,
"Spek, sweete bryd, I wot nat wher thou art."
This Nicholas anon let flee a fart,
As gret as if had ben a thundir dent,
And with that strook he was almost i-blent:
And he was redy with his yren hoot,
And Nicholas amid the ers he smoot.
Of goth the skyn an hande-brede aboute,
The hoote cultre brente so his toute;
And for the smert he wende for to dye:

As he were wood, anon he gan to crye,
"Help, watir, watir, help, for Goddes herte!"
This carpenter out of his slumber sterte,
And herd on crye watir, as he wer wood,
And thought, "Allas, now cometh Noes flood!"
He sit him up withoute wordes mo,
And with his ax he smot the corde a-two;
And doun he goth; he fond nowthir to selle
No breed ne ale, til he com to the selle
Upon the floor, and ther aswoun he lay.
Up styrt hir Alisoun, and Nicholay,
And cryden, "out and harrow!" in the strete.
The neyghebours bothe smal and grete
In ronnen, for to gauren on this man,
That yet aswowne lay, bothe pale and wan:
For with the fal he brosten had his arm.
But stond he muste to his owne harm,
For whan he spak, he was anon born doun
With heende Nicholas and Alisoun.
They tolden every man that he was wood;
He was agast and feerd of Noes flood
Thurgh fantasie, that of his vanité
He hadde i-bought him knedyng tubbes thre,
And hadde hem hanged in the roof above;
And that he preyed hem for Goddes love
To sitten in the roof *par compaignye*.

3819 —*to selle*. So in the fabliau of Aloul, in Barbazan, l. 591,
Qu'ainc tant come il mist à descendre
Ne trova point de pain à vendre.

The folk gan lawhen at his fantasye;
Into the roof they kyken, and they gape,
And torne al his harm into a jape.
For what so ever the carpenter answerde,
It was for nought, no man his resoun herde,
With othis greet he was so sworn adoun,
That he was holden wood in al the toun.
For every clerk anon right heeld with othir;
They seyde, "The man was wood, my leeve brother;"
And every man gan lawhen at his stryf.
Thus swyved was the carpenteres wyf,
For al his kepyng, and his gelousye;
And Absolon hath kist hir nethir ye;
And Nicholas is skaldid in his towte.
This tale is doon, and God save al the route.

THE PROLOGE OF THE REEVE.

Whan folk hadde lawhen of this nyce caas
Of Absolon and heende Nicholas,
Dyverse folk dyversely they seyde,
But for the moste part they lowh and pleyde:
Ne at this tale I sawh no man him greve,
But it were oonly Osewald the Reeve.
Bycause he was of carpentrye craft,
A litel ire in his herte is laft;
He gan to grucche and blamed it a lite.
"So theek," quod he, "ful wel coude I the quyte
With bleryng of a prowd mylleres ye,

If that me luste speke of ribaudye.
But yk am old; me list not pley for age;
Gras tyme is doon, my foddir is now forage.
My whyte top writeth myn olde yeeres;
Myn hert is al so moulyd as myn heeres;
But yit I fare as doth an open-ers;
That ilke fruyt is ever lenger the wers,
Til it be rote in mullok, or in stree.
We olde men, I drede, so fare we,
Til we be roten, can we nat be rype;
We hoppen alway, whil the world wol pype;
For in oure wil ther stiketh ever a nayl,
To have an hoor heed and a greene tayl,
As hath a leek; for though oure might be doon,
Oure wil desireth folye ever in oon:
For whan we may nat do, than wol we speke,
Yet in oure aisshen old is fyr i-reke.
Foure gledys have we, which I schal devyse,
Avanting, lyyng, angur, coveytise.
This foure sparkys longen unto eelde.
Oure olde lymes mowen be unweelde,
But wil ne schal nat fayle us, that is soth.
And yet I have alwey a coltes toth,
As many a yeer as it is passed henne,
Syn that my tappe of lyf bygan to renne.
For sikirlik, whan I was born, anon
Deth drough the tappe of lyf, and leet it goon:
And now so longe hath the tappe i-ronne,
Til that almost al empty is the tonne.

The streem of lyf now droppeth on the chymbe.
The sely tonge may wel rynge and chimbe
Of wrecchednes, that passed is ful yoore:
With olde folk, sauf dotage, is no more."
Whan that oure Host had herd this sermonyng,
He gan to speke as lordly as a kyng,
And seyde, "What amounteth al this wit?
What? schul we speke al day of holy wryt?
The devyl made a reve for to preche,
Or of a sowter a schipman, or a leche.
Sey forth thi tale and tarye nat the tyme:
Lo heer is Depford, and it is passed prime:
Lo Grenewich, ther many a schrewe is inne;
It were al tyme thi tale to bygynne."
"Now, sires," quod this Osewold the Reeve,
I pray yow alle, that noon of you him greeve,
Though I answere, and somwhat sette his howve,
For leeful is with force force to schowve.

3902. *Ex sutore nauclerus*, and *ex sutore medicus*, were both popular proverbs, and are found in medieval Latin writers.

3904.—*passed prime.* Tyrwhitt reads *half-way prime*, and observes, "in the discourse, &c. § xiv, I have supposed that this means *half* past *prime*, about half an hour after seven A.M. the *half way* between Prime and Terce. In the fictitious *Modus tenendi parliamentum*, a book not much older than Chaucer, *Hora mediæ primæ* seems to be used in the same sense. c. *de diebus et horis parliamenti.* MS. Cotton. Nero. D. vi. On common days *Parliamentum debet inchoari* hora mediæ primæ—*in diebus festivis* hora prima *propter divinum servitium.* In a contemporary French translation of this treatise, MS. *Harl.* 305, *hora mediæ primæ* is rendered *à la my heure le prime;* in an old English version, MS. *Harl.* 930, *the oure of myd pryme:* and in another, MS. *Harl.* 1309, *midde prime time.* Our author uses *prime large*, ver. 10674, to signify that prime was considerably past."

3909.—*sette his howve.* The same as set his cap. See l. 588.

This dronken Myllere hath i-tolde us heer,
How that bygiled was a carpenter,
Peraventure in scorn, for I am oon:
And by your leve, I schal him quyte anoon.
Right in his cherles termes wol I speke;
I pray to God his nekke mot to-breke!
He can wel in myn eye see a stalke,
But in his owne he can nought seen a balke."

THE REEVES TALE.

At Trompyngtoun, nat fer fro Cantebrigge,
Ther goth a brook, and over that a brigge,
Upon the whiche brook ther stant a melle:
And this is verray sothe that I you telle.
A meller was ther dwellyng many a day,
As eny pecok he was prowd and gay;
Pipen he coude, and fisshe, and nettys beete,
And turne cuppes, wrastle wel, and scheete.
Ay by his belt he bar a long panade,
And of a swerd ful trenchaunt was the blade.
A joly popper bar he in his pouche;
Ther was no man for perel durst him touche.
A Scheffeld thwitel bar he in his hose.

The Reeves Tale.— This was a very popular story in the middle ages, and is found under several different forms. It occurs frequently in the jest and story books of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Boccacio has given it in the Decameron, evidently from a fabliau, which has been printed in Barbazan under the title of *De Gombert et des deux clers*. Chaucer took the story from another fabliau, which I have printed and first pointed out to notice, in my *Anecdota Literaria*, p. 15.

Round was his face, and camois was his nose.
As pyled as an ape was his skulle.
He was a market-beter at the fulle.
Ther durste no wight hand upon him legge,
That he ne swor anon he schuld abegge.
A theef he was for soth of corn and mele,
And that a sleigh, and usyng for to stele.
His name was hoote deynous Symekyn.
A wyf he hadde, come of noble kyn:
The persoun of the toun hir fader was.
With hire he gaf ful many a panne of bras,
For that Symkyn schuld in his blood allye.
Sche was i-fostryd in a nonnerye:
For Symkyn wolde no wyf, as he sayde,
But sche were wel i-norissched and a mayde,
To saven his estaat and yomanrye:
And sche was proud and pert as is a pye.
A ful fair sighte was ther on hem two:
On haly dayes bifore hir wolde he go
With his typet y-bounde aboute his heed;
And sche cam aftir in a gyte of reed,
And Symkyn hadde hosen of the same.
Ther durste no wight clepe hir but *madame*:
Was noon so hardy walkyng by the weye,
That with hir dorste rage, or elles pleye,

3954.—*madame*. In the description of the nun (l. 378), who also prided herself upon her gentility, Chaucer says,—

It is right fair for to be clept *madame*,
And for to go to vigilies al byfore.

But if he wold be slayn of Symekyn
With panade, or with knyf, or boydekyn;
For gelous folk ben perilous everemo,
Algate they wolde here wyves wende so.
And eek for sche was somdel smoterlich,
Sche was as deyne as water in a dich,
As ful of hokir; and of bissemare.
Hir thoughte ladyes oughten hir to spare,
What for hir kynreed, and hir nortelrye,
That sche had lerned in the nonnerye.
O doughter hadden they betwix hem two,
Of twenti yeer, withouten eny mo,
Savyng a child that was of half yer age,
In cradil lay, and was a proper page.
This wenche thikke and wel i-growen was,
With camoys nose, and eyghen gray as glas;
And buttokkes brode, and brestes round and hye;
But right fair was hir heer, I wol nat lye.
The persoun of the toun, for sche was feir,
In purpos was to maken hir his heir,
Bothe of his catel and his mesuage,
And straunge made it of hir mariage.
His purpos was to bystow hir hye
Into som worthy blood of ancetrye;
For holy chirche good moot be despendid
On holy chirche blood that is descendid.
Therfore he wolde his joly blood honoure,
Though that he schulde holy chirche devoure.
Gret soken hath this meller, out of doute,

With whete and malt, of al the lond aboute;
And namely ther was a gret collegge,
Men clepe it the Soler-halle of Cantebregge,
Ther was here whete and eek here malt i-grounde.
And on a day it happed in a stounde,
Syk lay the mauncyple on a maledye,
Men wenden wisly that he schulde dye;
For which this meller stal bothe mele and corn
A thousend part more than byforn.
For ther biforn he stal but curteysly;
But now he is a theef outrageously.
For which the wardeyn chidde and made fare,
But therof sette the meller not a tare;
He crakked boost, and swor it was nat so.
Thanne weren there poore scoleres tuo,
That dwelten in the halle of which I seye;
Testyf they were, and lusty for to pleye;
And, oonly for here mirthe and revelrye
Uppon the wardeyn bysily they crye,
To geve hem leve but a litel stound
To go to melle and see here corn i-grounde;
And hardily they dursten ley here nekke,
The meller schuld nat stel hem half a pekke

3988.—*the Soler-halle.* There was a tradition in the university of Cambridge, at least as early as the time of Caius, and it may perhaps be correct, that the college alluded to by Chaucer, was Clare Hall. See Caius, Hist. Acad. p. 57, and Fuller's Hist. of the Univ. of Camb. p. 86, (ed. 1840). The name *Soler-halle*, of course means the hall with the soler or upper story, which, as Warton observes, would be a sufficient mark of distinction in early times.

Of corn by sleighte, ne by force hem reve.
And atte last the wardeyn gaf hem leve.
Johan hight that oon, and Alayn hight that other;
Of o toun were they born that highte Strothir,
Fer in the North, I can nat telle where.
This Aleyn maketh redy al his gere,
And on an hors the sak he cast anoon:
Forth goth Aleyn the clerk, and also Jon,
With good swerd and with bocler by her side.
Johan knew the way, that hem needith no gyde;
And at the mylle the sak adoun he layth.
Alayn spak first: "Al heil! Symond, in faith
How fares thy faire doughter, and thy wyf?"
"Alayn, welcome," quod Symond "by my lyf!"
And Johan also; how now! what do ye here?"
"By God!" quod Johan, "Symond, neede has na peere.
Him falles serve himself that has na swayn,
Or elles he is a fon, as clerkes sayn.
Oure mancyple, as I hope, wil be deed,
Swa werkes ay the wanges in his heed:
And therfore I is come, and eek Alayn,

4011.—*Johan.* This is the correct form of the name, the *a* being generally indicated by a dash on the upper limb of the *h*. In the manuscript from which our text is taken, the contraction is sometimes written Joh^{a}n. *John*, as Tyrwhitt prints it, is a much more modern orthography. Where the name is required to be a monosyllable, it is here spelt *Jon*, probably an abbreviation of familiarity, as *Tom*, and the like.

4012.—*Strothir.* This was the valley of Langstroth, or Langstrothdale, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, as pointed out by Dr. Whitaker. Hist. of Craven, p. 493. I am informed that the dialect of this district may be recognized in the phraseology of Chaucer's "scoleres two."

To grynde oure corn, and carie it ham ageyn.
I prey you speed us in al that ye may."
" It schal be doon," quod Symkyn, " by my fay!
What wol ye do whil that it is in hande?"
" By God! right by the hoper wol I stande,"
Quod Johan, " and se how that the corn gas inne.
Yet sawh I never, by my fader kynne!
How that the hoper waggis to and fra."
Aleyn answerde, " Johan, and wiltow swa?
Than wol I be bynethe, by my croun!
And se how that the mele fallys doun
Into the trough, that schal be my desport;
For, Jon, in faith, I may be of your sort,
I is as ille a meller as ere ye."
This mellere smyleth for here nyceté,
And thought, "Al this is doon but for a wyle;
They wenen that no man may hem bigile.
But, by my thrift, yet schal I blere here ye,
For al here sleight and al here philosophie;
The more queynte knakkes that they make,
The more wol I stele whan I take.
In stede of mele yet wol I geve hem bren.
The grettest clerks beth not the wisest men,
As whilom to the wolf thus spak the mare:

4030 4040 4050

4053.—*the wolf.* The fable of the Wolf and the Mare is found in the Latin Esopean collections, and in the early French poem of Renard le Contrefait, from whence it appears to have been taken into the English Reynard the Fox. In Renard le Contrefait, the wolf utters a similar sentiment (though differently expressed), to that in Chaucer,—

Or voi-ge bien tout en apert

Of al her art ne counte I nat a tare."
Out at the dore he goth ful pryvyly,
Whan that he saugh his tyme sotyly;
He loketh up and doun, til he hath founde
The clerkes hors, ther as it stood i-bounde
Behynde the mylle, under a levesel:
And to the hors he goth him faire and wel.
He strepeth of the bridel right anoon.
And whan the hors was loos, he gan to goon
Toward the fen there wilde mares renne,
Forth with "wi-he!" thurgh thikke and eek thurgh
This meller goth agayn, and no word seyde, [thenne.
But doth his note, and with the clerkes pleyde,
Til that her corn was fair and wel i-grounde.
And whan the mele was sakked and i-bounde,
This Johan goth out, and fynt his hors away,
And gan to crye, "harrow and weylaway!
Oure hors is lost! Aleyn, for Goddes banes,
Step on thy feet, cum on, man, al at anes.
Allas! our wardeyn hath his palfray lorn!"
This Aleyn al forgeteth mele and corn,
Al was out of his mynd his housbondrye;
"What wikked way is he gan?" gan he crye.
The wyf cam lepyng in-ward with a ren,

Que clergie bien sa saison pert;
Aucunes foiz vilain queaignent
Et leus où le clerc se mehaignent.
. . . . . .
Ge ne fis mie grant savoir,
Quant ge vouloie clers devenir.

Sche seyde, "Allas! your hors goth to the fen
With wylde mares, as fast as he may go:
Unthank come on his heed that band him so,
And he that bettir schuld han knyt the reyne!"
"Allas!" quod Johan, "Aleyn, for Cristes peyne!
Leg doun thi swerd, and I sal myn alswa;
I is ful wight, God wat, as is a ra;
By Goddes hart! he sal nat scape us bathe.
Why nad thou put the capil in the lathe?
Il hail, Aleyn, by God! thou is a fon!"
This sely clerkes speeden hem anoon
Toward the fen, bothe Aleyn and eek Jon.
And whan the myller sawh that they were gon,
He half a busshel of the flour hath take,
And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake.
He seyde, "I trowe the clerkes ben aferd!
Yet can a miller make a clerkes berd,
For al his art; ye, lat hem go here way!
Lo wher they goon! ye, lat the children play;
They get hym nat so lightly, by my croun!"
This seely clerkes ronnen up and doun,
With "Keep! keep! stand! stand! jossa, ware derere!
Ga wightly thou, and I sal keep him heere."
But schortly, til that it was verray night,
They cowde nat, though they did al here might,
Here capil cacche, it ran away so fast,
Til in a diche they caught him atte last.

4094.—*make a clerkes berd.* A proverbial phrase taken from the French, *faire la barbe à quelqu'un.* It occurs again further on, l. 5943.

Wery and wete as bestys in the reyn,
Comth sely Johan, and with him comth Aleyn.
"Allas!" quod Johan, "that day that I was born!
Now are we dryve til hethyng and to scorn.
Oure corn is stole, men woln us foles calle,
Bathe the wardeyn, and eek our felaws alle,
And namely the myller, weyloway!"
Thus pleyneth Johan, as he goth by the way
Toward the mylle, and Bayard in his hand.
The myller sittyng by the fyr he fand,
For it was night, and forther might they nought,
But for the love of God they him bisought
Of herberwh and of ese, as for her peny.
The myller sayd agayn, "If ther be eny,
Swich as it is, yit schul ye have your part.
Myn hous is streyt, but ye han lerned art;
Ye conne by argumentes make a place
A myl brood, of twenty foote of space:
Let se now if this place may suffyse,
Or make it rom with speche, as is your gyse."
"Now, Symond," seyde this Johan, "by seynt Cuthberd!
Ay is thou mery, and that is fair answerd.
I have herd say, men suld take of twa thinges,
Slik as he fynt, or tak slik as he bringes.
But specially I pray the, host ful deere,
Get us som mete and drynk, and mak us cheere,
And we wol paye trewly at the fulle:
With empty hand men may na hawkes tulle.

4132. *with empty hand.* Conf. l. 5997, where the proverb is given somewhat differently.

Lo heer our silver redy for to spende."
This meller into toun his doughter sende
For ale and breed, and rosted hem a goos,
And band her hors, he schold no more go loos:
And in his owne chambir hem made a bed,
With schetys and with chalouns fair i-spred,
Nat from his owen bed ten foot or twelve;
His doughter had a bed al by hirselve,
Right in the same chambre by and by:
It mighte be no bet, and cause why,
Ther was no rommer herberw in the place.
They sowpen, and they speken of solace,
And dronken ever strong ale atte beste.
Aboute mydnyght wente they to reste.
Wel hath the myller vernysshed his heed,
Ful pale he was, for-dronken, and nat reed;
He yoxeth, and he speketh thurgh the nose,
As he were on the quakke, or on the pose.
To bed he goth, and with him goth his wyf,
As eny jay sche light was and jolyf,
So was hir joly whistel wel y-wet;
The cradil at hire beddes feet is set,
To rokken, and to give the child to souke.
And whan that dronken was al in the crouke,
To bedde went the doughter right anon;
To bedde goth Aleyn, and also Jon,
Ther nas no more, him needeth no dwale.
This meller hath so wysly bibbed ale,
That as an hors he snortith in his sleep,

Ne of his tayl bihynd took he no keep.
His wyf bar him a burdoun, a ful strong,
Men might her rowtyng heeren a forlong.
The wenche routeth eek *par companye.*
Aleyn the clerk, that herd this melodye,
He pokyd Johan, and seyde, "Slepistow?
Herdistow ever slik a sang er now?
Lo, slik a conplyng is betwix hem alle,
A wilde fyr upon thair bodyes falle!
Wha herkned ever swilk a ferly thing?
Ye, thei sul have the flour of ille endyng!
This lange night ther tydes me na rest.
But yet na fors, al sal be for the best.
For, Johan," sayd he, "as ever mot I thryve,
If that I may, yone wenche sal I swyve.
Som esement hath lawe schapen us;
For Johan, ther is a lawe that says thus,
That if a man in a point be agreved,
That in another he sal be releeved.
Oure corn is stoln, sothly, it is na nay,
And we have had an ylle fitt to day;
And syn I sal have nan amendement
Agayn my los, I wol have esement.
By Goddes sale! it sal nan other be."
This Johan answerd, "Aleyn, avyse the:
The miller is a perlous man," he sayde,

4179. A marginal note in the MS. says,—Qui in uno gravatur, in alio debet relevari.

"And if that he out of his sleep abrayde,
He mighte do us bothe a vilonye!"
Aleyn answerd, "I count it nat a flye!"
And up he roos, and by the wenche he crepte.
This wenche lay upright, and faste slepte,
Til he so neih was or sche might aspye,
That it had ben to late for to crye.
And schortly for to seye, they weren at oon:
Now pley, Alein, for I wol speke of Jon.
This Johan lith stille a forlong whyle or two,
And to himself compleyned of his woo.
"Allas!" quod he, "this is a wikked jape:
Now may I say that I am but an ape.
Yet hath my felaw somwhat for his harm;
He hath the myllers doughter in his arm:
He auntred him, and has his needes sped,
And I lye as a draf-sak in my bed;
And when this jape is tald another day,
I sal be hald a daf, a cokenay.
Unhardy is unsely, as men saith.
I wol arise, and auntre it, in good faith."
And up he ros, and softely he wente
Unto the cradil, and in his hand it hente,
And bar it softe unto his beddis feet.
Soone after this the wyf hir routyng leet,
And gan awake, and went hir forth to pisse,
And cam agayn, and gan hir cradel mysse,
And groped heer and ther, but sche fond noon.
"Allas!" quod sche, "I had almost mysgoon;

I had almost goon to the clerkes bed,
Ey, *benedicite!* than had I foule i-sped!"
And forth sche goth, til sche the cradil fand.
Sche gropith alway forther with hir hand,
And fand the bed, and thoughte nat but good,
Bycause that the cradil by it stood,
Nat knowyng wher sche was, for it was derk;
But faire and wel sche creep in to the clerk,
And lith ful stille, and wolde han caught a sleep.
Withinne a while Johan the clerk up leep,
And on this goode wyf leyth on ful sore;
So mery a fytt ne hadd sche nat ful yore.
He priketh harde and deepe, as he were mad.
This joly lyf han this twey clerkes had,
Til that the thridde cok bygan to synge,
Aleyn wax wery in the dawenynge,
For he had swonken al the longe night,
And seyd, "Farwel, Malyn, my sweete wight!
The day is come, I may no lenger byde,
But evermo, wher so I go or ryde,
I am thin owen clerk, so have I seel!"
"Now, deere lemman," quod sche, "go, farwel!
But or thou go, o thing I wol the telle:
Whan that thou wendist hom-ward by the melle,
Right at the entré of the dore byhynde
Thou schalt a cake of half a busshel fynde,
That was i-maked of thyn owen mele,
Which that I hilp myn owen self to stele.
And, goode lemman, God the save and kepe!"

And with that word almost sche gan to weepe.
Aleyn uprist, and thought, "Er that it dawe
I wol go crepen in by my felawe;"
And fand the cradil with his hand anon.
"By God!" thought he, "al wrong I have i-goon;
My heed is toty of my swynk to nyght,
That makes me that I ga nought aright.
I wot wel by the cradel I have mysgo;
Heer lith the myller and his wyf also."
Forth he goth in twenty devel way
Unto the bed, ther as the miller lay.
He wende have crope by his felaw Jon,
And by the myller in he creep anon,
And caught him by the nekke, and soft he spak,
And seyde, "Jon, thou swyneshed, awak,
For Cristes sowle! and here a noble game;
For, by that lord that cleped is seynt Jame,
As I have thries in this schorte night
Swyved the myllers doughter bolt upright,
Whiles thou hast as a coward ben agast."
"Ye, false harlot," quod this mellere, "hast?
A! false traitour, false clerk!" quod he,
"Thou schalt be deed, by Goddes dignité!
Who durste be so bold to disparage
My doughter, that is come of hih lynage?"
And by the throte-bolle he caught Aleyn,
And he hent him dispitously ageyn,
And on the nose he smot him with his fest.
Doun ran the blody streem upon his brest;

And in the floor with nose and mouth to-broke
They walweden as pigges in a poke;
And up they goon, and doun they goon anon,
Til that the millner stumbled at a ston,
And doun he felle bakward on his wyf,
That wyste nothing of this nyce stryf;
For sche was falle asleepe a litel wight
With Jon the clerk, that waked al the night,
And with the falle right out of slepe sche brayde.
"Help, holy croys of Bromholme!" sche sayde,
"*In manus tuas*, Lord, to the I calle!
Awake, Symond, the feend is in thin halle!
My hert is broken! help! I am but deed!
Ther lythe upon my wombe and on myn heed.
Help, Symkyn! for this false clerkes fight."
This Johan stert up as fast as ever he might,
And grasped by the walles to and fro,
To fynde a staf; and sche sturt up also,
And knewe the estres bet than dede Jon,
And by the wal sche took a staf anon,
And sawh a litel glymeryng of a light;
For at an hool in schon the moone bright,
And by that light sche saugh hem bothe two;
But sikirly sche wiste nat who was who,

4284.—*holy croys of Bromholme.* Portions of the real cross were said to compose the cross of the priory of Bromholm, in Norfolk, brought into England with great ceremony in 1223, and thenceforth an extraordinarily popular object of pilgrimage. By the cross (or rood) of Bromholm! seems to have been a very common formula of swearing, and is found in Piers Ploughman, and elsewhere.

But as sche saugh a whit thing in hir ye.
And whan sche gan this white thing aspye,
Sche wend the clerk had wered a volupeer;
And with a staf sche drough hir neer and neer,
And wend have hit this Aleyn atte fulle,
And smot this meller on the piled sculle,
That doun he goth, and cryeth, "Harrow! I dye!"
This clerkes beeten him wel, and leet hym lye,
And greyth hem wel, and take her hors anon,
And eek here mele, and hoom anon they goon:
And at the millen dore they tok here cake,
Of half a buisshel flour ful wel i-bake.

Thus is the prowde miller wel i-bete,
And hath i-lost the gryndyng of the whete,
And payed for the soper every del
Of Aleyn and of Johan, that beten him wel;
His wyf is swyved, and his doughter als.
Lo! such it is a miller to be fals.
And therto this proverbe is seyd ful soth,
He thar nat weene wel that evyl doth.
A gylour schal himself bygiled be.
And God, that sitest in thy magesté,
Save al this compaignie, gret and smale.
Thus have I quyt the miller in his tale.

THE COKES PROLOGE.

The Cook of Londone, whil the Reeve spak,

4318.—*he thar nat.* The literal meaning of this proverb seems to be. "He need not imagine, or suppose, well, who does evil."

For joye he thought he clawed him on the bak:
"Ha, ha!" quod he, "for Cristes passioun,
This meller hath a scharp conclusioun
Upon his argument of herburgage.
Wel seyde Salomon in his langage,
Ne bryng nat every man into thyn hous,
For herburgage by night is perilous.
Wel aught a man avised for to be
Whom that he brought into his pryvyté.
I pray to God so gyf my body care,
Gif ever, siththen I highte Hogge of Ware,
Herd I a better miller set a-werke;
He hadde a jape of malice in the derke.
But God forbede that we stynten heere,
And therfore if ye vouchesauf to heere
A tale of me that am a pover man,
I wol yow telle as wel as I kan
A litel jape that fel in oure cité."
Oure Host answerde and seyde, "I graunt it the:
Now telle on, Roger, and loke it be good.
For many a pastey hastow lete blood,
And many a Jakk of Dover hastow sold,
That hath be twyes hoot and twyes cold.
Of many a pylgrym hastow Cristes curs;
For thy persly they faren yet the wors,
That they have eten with the stubbil goos:

4345.—*Jakk of Dover.* Some article of cookery which I have not found mentioned or alluded to elsewhere, and which it would therefore be in vain to attempt to explain.

For in thy schoppe is many a flye loos.
Now tell on, gentil Roger by thy name,
But yit I pray the be nought wroth for game;
A man may seye ful sothe in game and pley."
" Thow saist ful soth," quod Roger, "by my fey!
But soth play quad play, as the Flemyng saith:
And therfore, Herry Baillif, by thy faith,
Be thou nat wroth, or we departe her,
Though that my tale be of an hostyler.
But natheles, I wol not telle it yit,
But or we departe, it schal be quyt."
And therwithal he lowh and made chere,
And seyde his tale, as ye schal after heere.

THE COKES TALE.

A PRENTYS dwelled whilom in oure citee,
And of a craft of vitaillers was he:
Gaylard he was, as goldfynch in the schawe,
Broun as a bery, and a propre felawe,
With lokkes blak, and kempt ful fetously.
Dauncen he cowde wel and prately,
That he was cleped Perkyn Revellour.
He was as ful of love and paramour,
As is the honycombe of hony swete;

4353.—This line, as well as l. 4356, is omitted in MS. Harl., which reads *by my faith* in l. 4354, to make it rhyme with 4355.

4355.—*soth play*. Tyrwhitt, to make Flemish of the phrase, reads *soth play quade spel*, which after all is but half Flemish, and is contrary to the general authority of the MSS. He quotes from Sir John Harrington's *Apologie for Poetrie*, a similar English proverb, *soth bourde is no bourde*.

Wel were the wenche that mighte him meete.
[At every bridale wold he synge and hoppe:
He loved bet the taverne than the schoppe.]
For whan ther eny rydyng was in Cheepe,
Out of the schoppe thider wolde he lepe,
And tyl he hadde al that sight i-seyn,
And daunced wel, he nold nat come ageyn;
And gadred him a meyné of his sort,
To hoppe and synge, and make such disport:
And ther they setten stevene for to meete,
To pleyen atte dys in such a strete.
For in the toun ne was ther no prentys,
That fairer cowde caste a peyre dys
Than Perkyn couthe, and therto he was free
Of his dispence, in place of pryvyté.
That fand his mayster wel in his chaffare,
For often tyme he fond his box ful bare.
For such a joly prentys revelour,
That haunteth dys, revel, or paramour,
His maister schal it in his schoppe abye,
Al have he no part of the mynstralcye.
For thefte and ryot be convertyble,
Al can they pley on giterne or rubible.
Revel and trouthe, as in a lowe degré,
They ben ful wroth al day, as ye may see.
This joly prentys with his mayster bood,
Til he was oute neygh of his prentyshood,

4373. This and the following line are omitted in MS. Harl.
4375.—*in Cheepe.* Cheapside was the grand scene of city festivals and processions.

Al were he snybbyd bothe erly and late,
And som tyme lad with revel into Newgate.
But atte laste his mayster him bythought
Upon a day, whan he his papyr sought,
Of a proverbe, that saith this same word;
Wel bette is roten appul out of hord,
Than that it rote al the remenaunt:
So fareth it by a ryotous servaunt;
It is ful lasse harm to late him pace,
Than he schend al the servauntes in the place.
Therfore his mayster gaf him acquitaunce,
And bad him go, with sorwe and with meschaunce:
And thus the joly prentys had his leve.
Now let hym ryot al the night or leve.
And for ther is no thef withowten a lowke,
That helpeth him to wasten and to sowke
Of that he bribe can, or borwe may,
Anon he sent his bedde and his aray
Unto a compere of his owen sort,
That loved dis, and revel, and disport;
And had a wyf, that held for contenaunce
A schoppe, and swyved for hire sustenaunce.

[Fye theron, it is so foule, I wil nowe telle no forther,
For schame of the harlotrie that seweth after;
A velany it were thare of more to spelle,
Bot of a knyht and his sonnes my tale I wil forthe telle.]

4409.—*acquitaunce.* The MS. Harl. reads *acqueyntaunce.*

4413.—The lines from 4413 to 4420 are omitted in MS. Harl., but they are evidently genuine.

THE COKES TALE OF GAMELYN.

Litheth, and lestneth, and herkneth aright,
And ye schul heere a talkyng of a doughty knight;
Sire Johan of Boundys was his right name,
He cowde of norture ynough and mochil of game.
Thre sones the knight had, that with his body he wan,
The eldest was a moche schrewe, and sone he bygan.
His bretheren loved wel here fader, and of him were agast,
The eldest deserved his fadres curs, and had it at the last.
The goode knight his fader lyvede so yore,
That deth was comen him to, and handled him ful sore.
The goode knight cared sore, sik ther he lay,
How his children scholde lyven after his day.
He hadde ben wyde wher, but non housbond he was,
Al the lond that he had, it was verrey purchas.
Fayn he wold it were dressed amonges hem alle,
That ech of hem had his part, as it mighte falle.
Tho sent he into cuntré after wise knightes,
To helpe delen his londes and dressen hem to rightes.
He sent hem word by lettres they schulden hye blyve,
Yf they wolde speke with him whil he was on lyve.
Tho the knyghtes herden sik ther he lay,
Hadde they no reste nother night ne day,

The Cokes Tale of Gamelyn. Tyrwhitt omits this tale as being certainly not Chaucer's, in which judgment he is perhaps right. It is however found in the MS. Harl. and all the MSS. I have collated. Tyrwhitt ends abruptly with l. 4420. In MS. Harl. the tale of Gamelyn begins without any introduction; I have added the introductory lines from the Lansdowne MS. Other MSS., instead of them, have only two,—

But herof I wille passe as nowe,
And of yonge Gamelyn I wille telle yowe.

The tale of Gamelyn belongs to the Robin Hood cycle, and is curious as a picture of the times. It will be at once recognized as the foundation of Shakespeare's *As you like it*, though the dramatist appears to have taken it through the intermediance of Lodge's *Euphues Golden Legacy*, which is clearly built on the poem of Gamelyn, even the name of Adam Spencer being retained. In some MSS. Gamelyn's father is called *Johan of Burdeux*, an additional link with Lodge's novel.

Til they comen to him ther he lay stille
On his deth bedde, to abyde Goddes wille.
Than seyde the goode knight, syk ther he lay,
"Lordes, I you warne for soth, withoute nay,
I may no lengere lyven heer in this stounde;
For thurgh Goddes wille deth draweth me to grounde."
Ther nas non of hem alle that herd him aright,
That they hadden reuthe of that ilke knight,
And seyde, "Sir, for Goddes love, ne dismay you nought;
God may do bote of bale that is now i-wrought."
Than spak the goode knight, sik ther he lay,
"Boote of bale God may sende, I wot it is no nay;
But I byseke you, knightes, for the love of me,
Goth and dresseth my lond among my sones thre.
And, sires, for the love of God, deleth hem nat amys,
And forgetith nat Gamelyn, my yonge sone that is.
Taketh heed to that on, as wel as to that other;
Selde ye see ony eyr helpen his brother."
Tho leete they the knight lyen that was nought in hele,
And wenten in to counseil his londes for to dele;
For to delen hem alle to oon, that was her thought,
And for Gamelyn was yongest, he schuld have nought.
Al the lond that ther was they dalten it in two,
And leeten Gamelyn the yonge withoute lond go,
And ech of hem seyde to other ful lowde,
His bretheren might geve him lond whan he good cowde.
Whan they hadde deled the lond at here wille,
They come agein to the knight ther he lay ful stille,
And tolden him anon right how they hadden wrought;
And the knight there he lay liked it right nought.
Than seyde the knight, "I sware by seynt Martyn,
For al that ye have y-doon yit is the lond myn;
For Goddes love, neyhebours, stondeth alle stille,
And I wil dele my lond after my wille.
Johan, myn eldeste sone, schal have plowes fyve,

57.—*plowes fyve*. A plough of lund was as much as could be ploughed

That was my fadres heritage whil he was on lyve;
And my myddeleste sone fyf plowes of lond,
That I halp for to gete with my right hond;
And al myn other purchas of londes and leedes
That I byquethe Gamelyn, and alle my goode steedes.
And I byseke yow, goode men, that lawe conne of londe,
For Gamelynes love, that my queste stonde."
Thus dalte the knight his lond by his day,
Right on his deth bed sik ther he lay;
And sone aftirward he lay stoon stille,
And deyde whan tyme com, as it was Cristes wille.
And anon as he was deed, and under gras i-grave,
Sone the elder brother gyled the yonge knave;
He took into his hond his lond and his leede,
And Gamelyn himselfe to clothen and to feede.
He clothed him and fed him yvel and eek wrothe,
And leet his londes for-fare, and his houses bothe,
His parkes, and his woodes, and dede nothing wel,
And seththen he it abought on his faire fel.
So longe was Gamelyn in his brotheres halle,
For the strengest of good wil they dontiden him alle;
Ther was non therinne nowther yong ne olde,
That wolde wraththe Gamelyn, were he never so bolde.
Gamelyn stood on a day in his brotheres yerde,
And bygan with his hond to handlen his berde;
He thought on his londes that layen unsawe,
And his faire okes that doun were i-drawe;
His parkes were i-broken, and his deer byreeved;
Of alle his goode steedes noon was him byleved;
His howses were unhilid and ful yvel dight.
Tho thoughte Gamelyn it wente nought aright.
Afterward cam his brother walkynge thare,

---

with one plough. It was in the middle ages a common mode of estimating landed property.

61.—*and leedes.* *i. e.* and bondmen, the portion of the population which was bought and sold with the land.

And seyde to Gamelyn, "Is our mete yare?"
Tho wraththed him Gamelyn, and swor by Goddes book,
"Thou schalt go bake thiself, I wil nought be thy cook."
"How? brother Gamelyn, how answerest thou now?
Thou spake never such a word as thou dost now."
"By my faith," seyde Gamelyn, "now me thinketh neede,
Of alle the harmes that I have I tok never ar heede.
My parkes ben to-broken, and my deer byreved,
Of myn armure and my steedes nought is me bileved;
Al that my fader me byquath al goth to schame,
And therfor have thou Goddes curs, brother, by thy name."
Than byspak his brother, that rape was of rees,
"Stond stille, gadelyng, and hold right thy pees;
Thow schalt be fayn for to have thy mete and thy wede,
What spekest thou, Gamelyn, of lond other of leede?"
Thanne seyde Gamelyn, the child that was ying,
"Cristes curs mot he have that clepeth me gadelyng!
I am no worse gadelyng, ne no worse wight,
But born of a lady, and geten of a knight."
Ne durst he nat to Gamelyn ner a foote go,
But clepide to him his men, and seyde to hem tho,
"Goth and beteth this boy, and reveth him his wyt,
And lat him leren another tyme to answere me bet."
Thanne seyde the child, yonge Gamelyn,
"Cristes curs mot thou have, brother art thou myn;
And if I schal algate be beten anon,
Cristes curs mot thou have, but thou be that oon."
And anon his brother in that grete hete
Made his men to fette staves Gamelyn to bete.
Whan that everich of hem a staf had i-nome,
Gamelyn was war anon tho he seigh hem come;
Tho Gamelyn seyh hem come, he loked over al,
And was war of a pestel stood under a wal;
Gamelyn was light of foot and thider gan he lepe,
And drof alle his brotheres men right on an hepe.
He loked as a wilde lyoun, and leyde on good woon,
Tho his brother say that, he bigan to goon;

He fley up intil a loft, and schette the dore fast.
Thus Gamelyn with the pestel made hem alle agast.
Some for Gamelynes love and some for his eyghe.
Alle they drowe by halves, tho he gan to pleyghe.
"What! how now?" seyde Gamelyn, "evel mot ye thee!
Wil ye bygynne contek, and so sone flee?"
Gamelyn sought his brother, whider he was flowe,
And saugh wher he loked out at a wyndowe.
"Brother," sayde Gamelyn, "com a litel ner,
And I wil teche the a play atte bokeler."
His brother him answerde, and swor by seynt Rycher,
"Whil the pestel is in thin hond, I wil come no neer;
Brother, I wil make thy pees, I swere by Cristes ore,
Cast away the pestel, and wraththe the nomore."
"I mot neede," sayde Gamelyn, "wraththe me at oones,
For thou wolde make thy men to breke myne boones,
Ne had I hadde mayn and might in myn armes,
To have i-put hem fro me, he wolde have do me harmes."
"Gamelyn," sayde his brother, "be thou nought wroth,
For to seen the have harm it were me right loth;
I ne dide it nought, brother, but for a fondyng,
For to loken or thou were strong and art so ying."
"Com adoun than to me, and graunte me my bone,
Of thing I wil the aske, and we schul saught sone."
Doun than cam his brother, that fykil was and felle,
And was swithe sore agast of the pestelle.
He seyde, "Brother Gamelyn, aske me thy boone,
And loke thou me blame but I graunte sone."
Thanne seyde Gamelyn, "Brother, i-wys,
And we schulle ben at oon, thou most me graunte this,
Al that my fader me byquath whil he was on lyve,
Thou most do me it have, gif we schul nat stryve."
"That schalt thou have, Gamelyn, I swere by Cristes ore!
Al that thi fader the byquath, though thou woldest have more;
Thy lond, that lyth laye, ful wel it schal be sowe,
And thyn howses reysed up, that ben leyd so low."
Thus seyde the knight to Gamelyn with mowthe,

And thought eek of falsnes, as he wel couthe.
The knight thought on tresoun, and Gamelyn on noon,
And went and kist his brother, and than they were at oon.
Allas! yonge Gamelyn, nothing he ne wiste
With which a false tresoun his brother him kiste.
Litheth, and lestneth, and holdeth your tonge,
And ye schul heere talkyng of Gamelyn the yonge.
Ther was ther bysiden cryed a wrastlyng,
And therfor ther was sette up a ram and a ryng;
And Gamelyn was in good wil to wende therto,
For to preven his might what he cowthe do.
"Brother," seyde Gamelyn, "by seynt Richer,
Thou most lene me to nyght a litel courser
That is freisch to the spore, on for to ryde,
I most on an erande, a litel her byside."
"By God!" seyd his brother, "of steedes in my stalle
Go and chese the the best, and spare non of alle,
Of steedes or of coursers that stonden hem bisyde,
And tel me, goode brother, whider thou wolt ryde."
"Her byside, brother, is cryed a wrastlyng,
And therfor schal be set up a ram and a ryng;
Moche worschip it were, brother, to us alle,
Might I the ram and the ryng bryng home to this halle."
A steede ther was sadeled smertely and skeet,
Gamelyn did a paire spores fast on his feet,
He set his foot in the styrop, the steede he bystrood,
And toward the wrastelyng the yonge child rood.
Tho Gamelyn the yonge was ride out at the gate,
The fals knight his brother lokked it after thate,
And bysoughte Jhesu Crist that is heven kyng
He mighte breke his nekke in that wrastlyng.
As sone as Gamelyn com ther the place was,
He lighte doun of his steede, and stood on the gras,
And ther he herd a frankeleyn wayloway syng,
And bigan bitterly his hondes for to wryng.

172.—*a ram.* See before, the general prologue, l. 550.

"Goode man," seyde Gamelyn, "why makestow this fare?
Is ther no man that may you helpe out of this care?"
"Allas!" seyde this frankeleyn, "that ever was I bore!
For tweye stalworthe sones I wene that I have lore:
A champioun is in the place, that hath i-wrought me sorwe,
For he hath slayn my two sones, but if God hem borwe.
I wold geve ten pound, by Jhesu Crist! and more,
With the nones I fand a man to handil him sore."
"Goode man," sayde Gamelyn, "wilt thou wel doon,
Hold myn hors, whil my man draweth of my schoon,
And help my man to kepe my clothes and my steede,
And I wil into place go, to loke if I may speede."
"By God!" sayde the frankeleyn, "anon it schal be doon,
I wil myself be thy man, to drawen of thy schoon,
And wende thou into the place, Jhesu Crist the speede!
And drede not of thy clothes, nor of thy goode steede."
Barfoot and ungert Gamelyn in cam,
Alle that weren in the place heede of him they nam,
How he durst auntre him of him to doon his might
That was so doughty champioun in wrastlyng and in fight.
Up sterte the champioun raply and anoon,
Toward yonge Gamelyn he bigan to goon,
And sayde, "Who is thy fader and who is thy sire?
For sothe thou art a gret fool, that thou come hire."
Gamelyn answerde the champioun tho,
"Thou knewe wel my fader whil he couthe go,
Whiles he was on lyve, by seint Martyn!
Sir Johan of Boundys was his name, and I Gamelyn."
"Felaw," seyde the champioun, "al so mot I thryve,
I knew wel thy fader, whil he was on lyve,
And thiself, Gamelyn, I wil that thou it heere,
Whil thou were a yong boy a moche schrewe thou were."
Than seyde Gamelyn, and swor by Cristes ore,
"Now I am older woxe, thou schalt me fynd a more."
"Be God!" sayde the champioun, "welcome mote thou be!
Come thou ones in myn hond, schalt thou never the."
It was wel withinne the night, and the moone schon,

Whan Gamelyn and the champioun togider gon to goon.
The champioun caste tornes to Gamelyn that was prest,
And Gamelyn stood stille, and bad him doon his best.
Thanne seyde Gamelyn to the champioun,
" Thou art fast aboute to brynge me adoun ;
Now I have i-proved many tornes of thyne,
Thow most," he seyde, " proven on or tuo of myne."
Gamelyn to the champioun yede smartly anon,
Of alle the tornes that he cowthe he schewed him but oon,
And kast him on the left syde, that thre ribbes to-brak,
And therto his oon arm, that gaf a gret crak.
Thanne seyde Gamelyn smertly anoon,
" Schal it be holde for a cast, or elles for noon?"
"By God," seyd the champioun, "whether that it bee,
He that comes ones in thin hand schal he never thee!"
Than seyde the frankeleyn, that had his sones there,
" Blessed be thou, Gamelyn, that ever thou bore were!"
The frankleyn seyd to the champioun, of him stood him noon
" This is yonge Gamelyn that taughte the this pleye." [eye,
Agein answerd the champioun, that liked nothing welle,
" He is a lither mayster, and his pley is right felle ;
Sith I wrastled first, it is i-go ful yore,
But I was nevere my lyf handled so sore."
Gamelyn stood in the place allone withoute serk,
And seyd, " If ther be eny mo, lat hem come to werk,
The champioun that peyned him to werke so sore,
It semeth by his continaunce that he wil nomore."
Gamelyn in the place stood as stille as stoon,
For to abyde wrastelyng, but ther com noon ;
Ther was noon with Gamelyn wolde wrastle more,
For he handled the champioun so wonderly sore.
Two gentilmen ther were yemede the place,
Comen to Gamelyn, God geve him goode grace!
And sayde to hem, "Do on thyn hosen and thy schoon,
For sothe at this tyme this feire is i-doon."
And than seyde Gamelyn, " So mot I wel fare,
I have nought yet halvendel sold up my ware."

Tho seyde the champioun, "So brouk I my sweere,
He is a fool that therof beyeth, thou sellest it so deere."
Tho sayde the frankeleyn that was in moche care,
"Felaw," he seyde, "why lakkest thou his ware?
By seynt Jame in Galys, that many man hath sought,
Yet it is to good cheep that thou hast i-bought."
Tho that wardeynes were of that wrastlyng,
Come and broughte Gamelyn the ram and the ryng,
And seyden, "Have, Gamelyn, the ryng and the ram,
For the best wrasteler that ever here cam."
Thus wan Gamelyn the ram and the ryng,
And wente with moche joye home in the mornyng.
His brother seih wher he cam with the grete rowte,
And bad schitte the gate, and holde him withoute.
The porter of his lord was ful sore agast,
And stert anon to the gate, and lokked it fast.
Now litheth, and lestneth, bothe yong and olde,
And ye schul heere gamen of Gamelyn the bolde.
Gamelyn come therto for to have comen in,
And thanne was it i-schet faste with a pyn;
Than seyde Gamelyn, "Porter, undo the yate,
For many good mannes sone stondeth therate."
Than answerd the porter, and swor by Goddes berde,
"Thow ne schalt, Gamelyn, come into this yerde."
"Thow lixt," sayde Gamelyn, "so browke I my chyn!"
He smot the wyket with his foot, and brak awey the pyn.
The porter seyh tho it might no better be,
He sette foot on erthe, and fast bigan to flee.
"By my faith," seyde Gamelyn, "that travail is i-lore,
For I am of foot as lighte as thou, though thow haddest swore."
Gamelyn overtook the porter, and his teene wrak,
And gert him in the nekke, that the bon to-brak,
And took him by that oon arm, and threw him in a welle,
Seven fadmen it was deep, as I have herd telle.
Whan Gamelyn the yonge thus hadde pleyd his play,
Alle that in the yerde were, drewen hem away;
They dredden him ful sore, for werkes that he wroughte,

And for the faire company that he thider broughte.
Gamelyn yede to the gate, and leet it up wyde;
He leet in alle maner men that gon in wold or ryde,
And seyde, "Ye be welcome withouten eny greeve,
For we wiln be maistres heer, and aske no man leve.
Yestirday I lefte," seyde yonge Gamelyn,
"In my brother seller fyve tonne of wyn;
I wil not that this compaignye parten a-twynne,
And ye wil doon after me, whil eny sope is thrynne;
And if my brother grueche, or make foul cheere,
Other for spense of mete or drynk that we spenden heere,
I am oure catour, and bere oure aller purs,
He schal have for his grucchyng seint Maries curs.
My brother is a nyggoun, I swer by Cristes ore,
And we wil spende largely that he hath spared yore,
And who that maketh grucchyng that we here dwelle,
He schal to the porter into the draw-welle."
Seven dayes and seven nyght Gamelyn held his feste,
With moche myrth and solas that was ther and no cheste;
In a litel toret his brother lay i-steke,
And sey hem wasten his good, but durst he not speke.
Erly on a mornyng on the eighte day
The gestes come to Gamelyn and wolde gon here way.
"Lordes," seyde Gamelyn, "will ye so hye?
Al the wyn is not yet y-dronke, so brouk I myn ye."
Gamelyn in his herte was he ful wo,
Whan his gestes took her leve from him for to go;
He wold they had lenger abide, and they seyde nay,
But bitaughte Gamelyn God, and good day.
Thus made Gamelyn his fest, and brought it wel to ende,
And after his gestys took leve to wende.
Litheth, and lestneth, and holdeth youre tonge,
And ye schul heere gamen of Gamelyn the yonge;
Herkneth, lordynges, and lesteneth aright,
Whan alle the gestes were goon how Gamelyn was dight.
Al the whil that Gamelyn heeld his mangerye,
His brother thought on him be wreke with his treccherie.

Tho Gamelyns gestes were riden and i-goon,
Gamelyn stood allone, frendes had he noon ;
Tho after ful soone withinne a litel stounde,
Gamelyn was i-take and ful hard i-bounde.
Forth com the fals knight out of the selleer,
To Gamelyn his brother he yede ful neer,
And sayde to Gamelyn, "Who made the so bold
For to stroye my stoor of myn houshold ?"
"Brother," seyde Gamelyn, "wraththe the right nought,
For it is many day i-gon siththen it was bought ;
For, brother, thou hast i-had, by seynt Richer,
Of fiftene plowes of lond this sixtene yer,
And of alle the beestes thou hast forth bred,
That my fader me biquath on his deth bed,
Of al this sixtene yeer I geve the the prow,
For the mete and the drynk that we have spended now."
Thanne seyde the fals knyght, evel mot he the,
"Herkne, brother Gamelyn, what I wol geve the ;
For of my body, brother, geten heir have I noon,
I wil make the myn heir, I swere by seint Johan."
"*Par ma foy!*" sayd Gamelyn, "and if it so be,
And thou thenke as thou seyst, God yelde it the !"
Nothing wiste Gamelyn of his brotheres gyle ;
Therfore he him bigyled in a litel while.
"Gamelyn," seyde he, "o thing I the telle,
Tho thou threwe my porter in the draw-welle,
I swor in that wraththe, and in that grete moot,
That thou schuldest be bounde bothe hand and foot ;
Therfore I the biseche, brother Gamelyn,
Lat me nought be for-sworn, as brother art thou myn,
Lat me bynde the now bothe hand and feet,
For to holde myn avow, as I the biheet."
"Brother," sayde Gamelyn, "al so mot I the !
Thou schalt not be for-sworen for the love of me."
Tho made they Gamelyn to sitte, might he nat stonde,
Tyl they had him bounde bothe foot and honde.
The fals knight his brother of Gamelyn was agast,

And sent aftir feteres to feteren him fast.
His brother made lesynges on him ther he stood,
And told hem that comen in that Gamelyn was wood.
Gamelyn stood to a post bounden in the halle,
Tho that comen in ther loked on him alle.
Ever stood Gamelyn even upright;
But mete ne drynk had he non neither day ne night.
Than seyde Gamelyn, "Brother, by myn hals,
Now I have aspied thou art a party fals;
Had I wist that tresoun that thou haddest y-founde,
I wolde have geve the strokes or I had be bounde!"
Gamelyn stood bounden stille as eny stoon,
Two dayes and two nightes mete had he noon.
Thanne seyde Gamelyn, that stood y-bounde stronge,
"Adam spenser, me thinkth I faste to longe:
Adam spenser, now I bysech the,
For the mochel love my fader loved the,
Yf thou may come to the keyes, lese me out of bond,
And I wil parte with the of my free lond."
Thanne seyde Adam, that was the spencer,
"I have served thy brother this sixtene yeer,
If I leete the goon out of his bour,
He wolde say after-ward I were a traytour."
"Adam," sayde Gamelyn, "so brouk I myn hals!
Thou schalt fynde my brother atte laste fals;
Therfor, brother Adam, louse me out of bond,
And I wil parte with the of my free lond."
"Up swich a forward," seyd Adam, "i-wys,
I wil do therto al that in me is."
"Adam," seyde Gamelyn, "al so mot I the,
I wol hold the covenant, and thou wil me."
Anon as Adames lord to bedde was i-goon,
Adam took the keyes, and leet Gamelyn out anoon;
He unlokked Gamelyn bothe hand and feet,
In hope of avauncement that he him byheet.
Than seyde Gamelyn, "Thanked be Goddes sonde!
Now I am loosed bothe foot and honde,

Had I now eten and dronken aright,
Ther is noon in this hous schulde bynde me this night."
Adam took Gamelyn, as stille as ony stoon,
And ladde him into spence rapely and anon,
And sette him to soper right in a privé stede,
And bad him do gladly, and Gamelyn so dede.
Anon as Gamelyn hadde eten wel and fyn,
And therto y-dronke wel of the rede wyn,
"Adam," seyde Gamelyn, "what is now thy reed?
Wher I go to my brother and girde of his heed?"
"Gamelyn," seyd Adam, "it schal not be so,
I can teche the a reed that is worth the two:
I wot wel for sothe that this is no nay,
We schul have a mangery right on Sonday,
Abbotes and priours many heer schal be,
And other men of holy chirche, as I telle the;
Thow schalt stonde up by the post as thou were hond-fast,
And I schal leve hem unloke, awey thou may hem cast.
Whan that they have eten and waisschen here hondes,
Thou schalt biseke hem alle to bryng the out of bondes,
And if they wille borwe the, that were good game,
Then were thou out of prisoun, and I out of blame;
And if everich of hem say unto us nay,
I schal do another thing, I swere by this day!
Thou schalt have a good staf and I wil have another,
And Cristes curs have that oon that faileth that other!"
"Ye, for Gode!" sayde Gamelyn, "I say it for me,
If I fayle on my syde, yvel mot I the!
If we schul algate assoile hem of here synne,
Warne me, brother Adam, whan I schal bygynne."
"Gamelyn," seyde Adam, "by seynte Charité,

420.—*spence*. The spence, or, according to the original French form of the word, *despence*, was the closet or room in convents and large houses, where the victuals, wine, and plate were locked up, and the person who had the charge of it was called the *spencer*, or the *despencer* Hence originated two common family names.

I wil warne the byforn whan that it schal be ;
Whan I twynk on the, loke for to goon,
And cast awey the feteres, and come to me anoon."
" Adam," seide Gamelyn, " blessed be thy bones !
That is a good counseil gevyng for the nones ;
If they werne me thanne to brynge me out of bendes,
I wol sette goode strokes right on here lendes."
Tho the Sonday was i-come, and folk to the feste,
Faire they were welcomed bothe lest and meste ;
And ever as they atte halle dore comen in,
They caste their eye on yonge Gamelyn.
The fals knight his brother, ful of trechery,
Alle the gestes that ther were atte mangery,
Of Gamelyn his brother he tolde hem with mouthe,
Al the harm and the schame that he telle couthe.
Tho they were served of messes tuo or thre,
Than seyde Gamelyn, " How serve ye me ?
It is nought wel served, by God that al made !
That I sytte fastyng, and other men make glade."
The fals knight his brother, ther that he stood,
Tolde alle his gestes that Gamelyn was wood ;
And Gamelyn stood stille, and answerde nought,
But Adames wordes he held in his thought.
Tho Gamelyn gan speke dolfully withalle
To the gret lordes that saten in the halle :
" Lordes," he seyde, " for Cristes passioun,
Helpeth brynge Gamelyn out of prisoun."
Than seyde an abbot, sorwe on his cheeke !
" He schal have Cristes curs and seynte Maries eeke,
That the out of prisoun beggeth other borwe,
But ever worthe hem wel that doth the moche sorwe."
After that abbot than spak another,
" I wold thin heed were of, though thou were my brother !
Alle that the borwe, foule mot hem falle !"
Thus they seyde alle that were in the halle.
Than seyde a priour, yvel mot he thryve !
" It is moche skathe, boy, that thou art on lyve."

"Ow," seyde Gamelyn, "so brouk I my bon!
Now I have aspyed that freendes have I non.
Cursed mot he worthe bothe fleisch and blood,
That ever do priour or abbot ony good!"
Adam the spencer took up the cloth,
And loked on Gamelyn, and say that he was wroth;
Adam on the pantrye litel he thought,
But tuo goode staves to halle dore he brought.
Adam loked on Gamelyn, and he was war anoon,
And cast awey the feteres, and he bigan to goon:
Tho he com to Adam, he took that oo staf,
And bygan to worche, and goode strokes gaf.
Gamelyn cam into the halle, and the spencer bothe,
And loked hem aboute, as they had be wrothe;
Gamelyn sprengeth holy-water with an oken spire,
That some that stoode upright fel in the fire.
Ther was no lewede man that in the halle stood,
That wolde do Gamelyn eny thing but good,
But stoode besyde, and leet hem bothe werche,
For they hadde no rewthe of men of holy cherche;
Abbot or priour, monk or chanoun,
That Gamelyn overtok, anon they yeeden doun.
Ther was non of hem alle that with his staf mette,
That he made him overthrowe and quyt him his dette.
"Gamelyn," seyde Adam, "for seynte Charité,
Pay large lyverey, for the love of me,
And I wil kepe the dore, so ever here I masse!
Er they ben assoyled there shan noon passe.
"Dowt the nought," seyde Gamelyn, "whil we ben in feere,
Kep thou wel the dore, and I wol werche heere,
Stere the, good Adam, and lat ther noon flee,
And we schul telle largely how many ther be."
"Gamelyn," seyde Adam, "do hem but good:
They ben men of holy chirche, draw of hem no blood,
Save wel the croune, and do hem non harmes,
But brek bothe her legges and siththen here armes."
Thus Gamelyn and Adam wroughte right fast.

And pleyden with the monkes, and made hem agast.
Thider they come rydyng jolily with swaynes,
But hom agen they were i-lad in cartes and in waynes.
Tho they hadden al y-don, than seyde a gray frere,
" Allas ! sire abbot, what did we now heere ?
Tho that comen hider, it was a colde reed,
Us hadde ben better at home with water and breed."
Whil Gamelyn made ordres of monkes and frere,
Ever stood his brother, and made foul chere ;
Gamelyn up with his staff, that he wel knew,
And gert him in the nekke, that he overthrew ;
A litel above the girdel the rigge-bon to-barst ;
And sette him in the feteres ther he sat arst.
" Sitte ther, brother," sayde Gamelyn,
" For to colyn thy blood, as I dide myn."
As swithe as they hadde i-wroken hem on here foon,
They askeden watir and wisschen anoon,
What some for here love and some for awe,
Alle the servantz served hem of the beste lawe.
The scherreve was thennes but a fyve myle,
And al was y-told him in a litel while,
How Gamelyn and Adam had doon a sory rees,
Bounden and i-wounded men agein the kinges pees ;
Tho bigan sone strif for to wake,
And the scherref aboute cast Gamelyn for to take.
Now lytheth and lestneth, so God gif you goode fyn!
And ye schul heere good game of yonge Gamelyn.
Four and twenty yonge men, that heelden hem ful bolde,
Come to the schirref and seyde that they wolde
Gamelyn and Adam fetten away.
The scherref gaf hem leve, soth as I you say ;
They hyeden faste, wold they nought bylynne,
Til they come to the gate, ther Gamelyn was inne.
They knokked on the gate, the porter was ny,
And loked out at an hol, as man that was sly.
The porter hadde byholde hem a litel while,
He loved wel Gamelyn, and was adrad of gyle,

And asked hem withoute what was here wille.
For al the grete company thanne spak but oon,
"Undo the gate, porter, and lat us in goon."
Than seyde the porter, "So brouke I my chyn,
Ye schul sey your erand er ye comen in."
"Sey to Gamelyn and Adam, if here wille be,
We wil speke with hem wordes two or thre."
"Felaw," seyde the porter, "stond there stille,
And I wil wende to Gamelyn to witen his wille."
In went the porter to Gamelyn anoon,
And seyde, "Sir, I warne you her ben come your foon,
The scherreves meyné ben atte gate,
For to take you bothe, schul ye nat skape."
"Porter," seyde Gamelyn, "so moot I wel the!
I wil allowe the thy wordes whan I my tyme se;
Go agayn to the gate, and dwel with hem a while,
And thou schalt se right sone, porter, a gyle."
"Adam," sayde Gamelyn, "looke the to goon,
We have foomen atte gate, and frendes never oon;
It ben the schirrefes men, that hider ben i-come,
They ben swore to-gidere that we schul be nome."
"Gamelyn," seyde Adam, "hye the right blyve,
And if I faile the this day, evel mot I thryve!
And we schul so welcome the scherreves men,
That some of hem schul make here beddes in the den."
Atte posterne gate Gamelyn out went,
And a good cart staf in his hand he hente;
Adam hente sone another gret staf,
For to helpe Gamelyn, and goode strokes gaf.
Adam felde tweyne, and Gamelyn felde thre,
The other setten feet on erthe, and bygonne fle.
"What?" seyde Adam, "so ever here I masse!
I have a draught of good wyn, drynk er ye passe."
"Nay, by God!" sayde they, "thy drynk is not good,
It wolde make mannes brayne to lien in his hood."
Gamelyn stood stille, and loked him aboute,
And seih the scherreve come with a gret route.

"Adam," sayde Gamelyn, "my reed is now this,
Abide we no lenger, lest we fare amys:
I rede that we to wode goon ar that we be founde,
Better is us ther loose than in town y-bounde."
Adam took by the hond yonge Gamelyn.
And everich of hem tuo drank a draught of wyn,
And after took her coursers and wenten her way.
Tho fond the scherreve nest, but non ay.
The scherreve lighte adoun, and went into the halle,
And fond the lord y-fetered faste withalle.
The scherreve unfetered him sone, and that anoon,
And sent after a leche to hele his rigge-boon.
Lete we now this fals knight lyen in his care,
And talke we of Gamelyn, and loke how he fare.
Gamelyn into the woode stalkede stille,
And Adam the spenser liked ful ylle;
Adam swor to Gamelyn, by seynt Richer,
"Now I see it is mery to be a spencer,
That lever me were keyes for to bere,
Than walken in this wilde woode my clothes to tere."
"Adam," seyde Gamelyn, "dismaye the right nought;
Many good mannes child in care is i-brought."
And as they stoode talkyng bothen in feere,
Adam herd talkyng of men, and neyh him thought thei were.
Tho Gamelyn under the woode loked aright,
Sevene score of yonge men he saugh wel adight;
Alle satte atte mete in compas aboute.
"Adam," seyde Gamelyn, "now have we no doute,
After bale cometh boote, thurgh grace of God almight;
Me thynketh of mete and of drynk that I have a sight."
Adam lokede tho under woode bowgh,
And whan he seyh mete he was glad ynough;
For he hopede to God for to have his deel,
And he was sore alonged after a good meel.
As he seyde that word, the mayster outlawe
Saugh Gamelyn and Adam under woode schawe:
"Yonge men," seyde the maister, "by the goode roode,

I am war of gestes, God send us non but goode;
Yonder ben tuo yonge men, wonder wel adight,
And paraventure ther ben mo, who so loked aright:
Ariseth up, ye yonge men, and fetteth hem to me,
It is good that we witen what men they bee."
Up ther sterten sevene fro the dyner,
And metten with Gamelyn and Adam spenser.
Whan they were neyh hem, than seyde that oon,
"Yeldeth up, yonge men, your bowes and your floon."
Thanne seyde Gamelyn, that yong was of elde,
"Moche sorwe mot he have that to you hem yelde!
I curse non other, but right myselve,
They ye fette to yow fyve, thanne ye be twelve."
Tho they herde by his word that might was in his arm,
Ther was none of hem alle that wolde do him harm,
But sayd unto Gamelyn, myldely and stille,
"Com afore our maister, and sey to him thy wille."
"Yonge men," sayde Gamelyn, "by your lewté,
What man is your maister that ye with be?"
Alle they answerde withoute lesyng,
"Oure maister is i-crouned of outlawes kyng."
"Adam," seyde Gamelyn, "go we in Cristes name,
He may neyther mete nor drynk werne us for schame.
If that he be heende, and come of gentil blood,
He wol geve us mete and drynk, and doon us som good."
"By seynt Jame!" seyd Adam, "what harm that I gete,
I wil auntre to the dore that I hadde mete."
Gamelyn and Adam wente forth in feere,
And they grette the maister that they founde there.
Than seide the maister, kyng of outlawes,
"What seeke ye, yonge men, under woode schawes?"
Gamelyn answerde the kyng with his croune,
"He moste needes walke in woode, that may not walke in towne.
Sire, we walke not heer noon harm for to do,
But if we meete with a deer, to scheete therto,
As men that ben hungry, and mow no mete fynde,
And ben harde bystad under woode lynde."
Of Gamelynes wordes the maister hadde routhe,

And seyde, " Ye schal have ynough, have God my trouthe."
He bad hem sitte ther adoun, for to take reste ;
And bad hem ete and drynke and that of the beste.
As they sete and eeten and dronke wel and fyn,
Than seyd that oon to that other, " This is Gamelyn."
Tho was the maister outlawe into counseil nome,
And told how it was Gamelyn that thider was i-come.
Anon as he herde how it was bifalle,
He made him maister under him over hem alle.
Within the thridde wyke him com tydyng,
To the maister outlawe that tho was her kyng,
That he schulde come hom, his pees was i-made ;
And of that goode tydyng he was tho ful glad.
Tho seyde he to his yonge men, soth for to telle,
" Me ben comen tydynges I may no lenger dwelle."
Tho was Gamelyn anon, withoute taryyng,
Made maister outlawe, and crouned her kyng.
Tho was Gamelyn crouned kyng of outlawes,
And walked a while under woode schawes.
The fals knight his brother was scherreve and sire,
And leet his brother endite for hate and for ire.
Tho were his bonde-men sory and nothing glade,
Whan Gamelyn her lord wolves-heed was cryed and made ;
And sente out of his men wher they might him fynde,
For to seke Gamelyn under woode lynde,
To telle him tydynges how the wynd was went,
And al his good reved, and his men schent.

694. *wolves-heed.* This was the ancient Saxon formula of outlawry and seems to have heen literally equivalent to setting the man's head at the same estimate as a wolf's head. In the laws of Edward the Confessor, it is said of a person who has fled justice, " Si vero postea repertus fuerit, et retineri possit, vivus regi reddatur, vel caput ejus, si se defenderit. Lupinum enim gerit caput, quod anglice *wulfes-heofod* dicitur. Et hæc est lex communis et generalis de omnibus utlagatis."

698—*his men schent.* When a man's lands were seized by force or unjustly, the peasantry on the estates were exposed to be plundered and ill-treated by the followers of the intruder.

Whan they had him founde, on knees they hem sette,
And adoun with here hood, and here lord grette:
"Sire, wraththe you nought, for the goode roode,
For we have brought you tydynges, but they be nat goode.
Now is thy brother scherreve, and hath the baillye,
And he hath endited the, and wolves-heed doth the crie."
"Allas!" seyde Gamelyn, "that ever I was so slak,
That I ne hadde broke his nekke, tho his rigge brak!
Goth, greteth hem wel, myn housbondes and wyf,
I wol ben atte nexte schire, have God my lyf."
Gamelyn cam wel redy to the nexte schire,
And ther was his brother bothe lord and sire.
Gamelyn com boldelych into the moot halle,
And put adoun his hood among the lordes alle:
"God save you alle, lordynges, that now here be!
But broke-bak scherreve, evel mot thou the!
Why hast thou do me that schame and vilonye,
For to late endite me, and wolves-heed me crye?"
Tho thought the fals knight for to ben awreke,
And leet take Gamelyn, most he nomore speke;
Might ther be nomore grace, but Gamelyn atte last
Was cast into prisoun and fetered ful fast.
Gamelyn hath a brother that highte sir Ote,
As good a knight and heende as mighte gon on foote.
Anon ther yede a messager to that goode knight,
And told him altogidere how Gamelyn was dight.
Anon as sire Ote herde how Gamelyn was adight,
He was wonder sory, was he nothing light,
And leet sadle a steede, and the way he nam,
And to his tweyne bretheren anon right he cam.
"Sire," seyde sire Ote to the scherreve tho,
"We ben but thre bretheren, schul we never be mo,

701.—*wraththe you nought.* The messengers of ill tidings, however innocent themselves, often experienced all the first anger of the person to whom they carried them, in the ages of feudal power. Hence the bearer of ill news generally began by deprecating the wrath of the person addressed.

And thou hast y-prisoned the best of us alle;
Swich another brother yvel mot him bifalle!"
"Sire Ote," seide the fals knight, "lat be thi curs,
By God, for thy wordes he schal fare the wurs;
To the kynges prisoun anon he is y-nome,
And ther he schal abyde til the justice come."
"Pardé!" seyde sir Ote, "better it schal be,
I bidde him to maympris, that thou graunt him me,
Til the nexte sittyng of delyveraunce,
And thanne lat Gamelyn stande to his chaunce."
"Brother, in swich a forthward take him to the,
And by thi fader soule, that the bygat and me,
But if he be redy whan the justice sitte
Thou schalt bere the juggement for al thi grete witte."
"I graunte wel," seide sir Ote, "that it so be:
Let delyver him anon, and tak him to me."
Tho was Gamelyn delyvered to sire Ote his brother;
And that night dwelleden that on with that other.
On the morn seyde Gamelyn to sire Ote the heende,
"Brother," he seide, "I moot for sothe from the wende,
To loke how my yonge men leden here lyf,
Whether they lyven in joie or elles in stryf."
"Be God!" seyde sire Ote, "that is a cold reed,
Now I see that al the cark schal fallen on myn heed;
For whan the justice sitte, and thou be nought y-founde,
I schal anon be take, and in thy stede i-bounde."
"Brother," sayde Gamelyn, "dismaye the nought,
For by seint Jame in Gales, that many man hath sought,
If that God almighty hold my lyf and witt,
I wil be ther redy whan the justice sitt."
Than seide sir Ote to Gamelyn, "God schilde the fro schame,
Com whan thou seest tyme, and bring us out of blame."
Litheth and lestneth and holdeth you stille,
And ye schul here how Gamelyn had al his wille.
Gamelyn wente agein under woode rys,
And fond there pleying yonge men of prys;
Tho was yonge Gamelyn glad and blithe ynough,

Whan he fond his mery men under woode bough.
Gamelyn and his men talked in feere,
And they hadde good game here maister to heere,
They tolden him of aventures that they hadde founde,
And Gamelyn hem tolde agein how he was fast i-bounde.
Whil Gamelyn was outlawed, had he no cors;
There was no man that for him ferde the wors,
But abbotes and priours, monk and chanoun,
On hem left he nothing whan he might hem nom.
Whil Gamelyn and his men made merthes ryve,
The fals knight his brother, yvel mot he thryve!
For he was fast about bothe day and other,
For to hyre the quest, to hangen his brother.
Gamelyn stood on a day, and as he biheeld
The woodes and the schawes in the wilde feeld,
He thought on his brother how he him beheet
That he wolde be redy, whan the justice seet;
He thoughte wel that he wolde, withoute delay,
Come afore the justice to kepen his day,
And seide to his yonge men, "Dighteth you yare,
For whan the justice sitt, we moote be thare,
For I am under borwe til that I come,
And my brother for me to prisoun schal be nome."
"By seint Jame!" seyde his yonge men, "and thou rede [therto,
Ordeyne how it schal be, and it schal be do."
Whil Gamelyn was comyng ther the justice sat,
The fals knight his brother, forgat he nat that,
To huyre the men on his quest to hangen his brother;
Though he hadde nought that oon, he wolde have that [other.
Tho cam Gamelyn fro under woode rys,
And broughte with him his yonge men of prys.
"I se wel," seyde Gamelyn, "the justice is sette,
Go aforn, Adam, and loke how it spette."
Adam went into the halle, and loked al aboute,

775.—*abbotes.* Gamelyn's enmity to abbots and monks is entirely in character with the Robin Hood ballads—it was the feeling of the age.

He seyh there stonde lordes gret and stoute,
And sir Ote his brother fetered wel fast:
Tho went Adam out of halle, as he were agast.
Adam said to Gamelyn, and to his felaws alle,
"Sir Ote stant i-fetered in the moot halle."
"Yonge men," seide Gamelyn, "this ye heeren alle:
Sire Ote stant i-fetered in the moot halle.
If God gif us grace wel for to doo,
He schal it abegge that broughte him thertoo."
Thanne sayde Adam, that lokkes hadde hore,
"Cristes curs most he have that him bond so sore!
And thou wilt, Gamelyn, do after my red,
Ther is noon in the halle schall bere awey his heed."
"Adam," seyde Gamelyn, "we wiln nought don so,
We wil slee the giltyf, and lat the other go.
I wil into the halle, and with the justice speke,
On hem that ben gulyf I wil ben awreke.
Lat non skape at the dore, take, yonge men, yeme,
For I wil be justice this day domes to deme.
God spede me this day at my newe werk!
Adam, com on with me, for thou schalt be my clerk."
His men answereden him and bad him doon his best,
"And if thou to us have neede, thou schalt fynde us prest;
We wiln stande with the whil that we may dure,
And but we werke manly, pay us non hure."
"Yonge men," seyde Gamelyn, "so mot I wel the!
As trusty a maister ye schal fynde of me."
Right there the justice sat in the halle,
In wente Gamelyn amonges hem alle.
Gamelyn leet unfetere his brother out of beende.
Thanne seyde sire Ote, his brother that was heende,
"Thou haddest almost, Gamelyn, dwelled to longe,
For the quest is oute on me, that I schulde honge."
"Brother," seyde Gamelyn, "so God gif me good rest!
This day they schuln ben hanged that ben on thy quest;
And the justice bothe that is jugges man,
And the scherreve bothe, thurgh him it bigan."

Than seyde Gamelyn, to the justise,
"Now is thy power y-don, thou most nedes arise;
Thow hast geven domes that ben yvel dight,
I wil sitten in thy sete, and dressen hem aright."
The justice sat stille, and roos nought anoon;
And Gamelyn clevede his cheeke boon;
Gamelyn took him in his arm, and no more spak,
But threw him over the barre, and his arm to-brak.
Durste non to Gamelyn seye but good,
For-fered of the company that withoute stood.
Gamelyn sette him doun in the justices sete,
And sire Ote his brother by him, and Adam at his feet.
Whan Gamelyn was i-set in the justices stede,
Herkneth of a bourde that Gamelyn dede.
He leet fetre the justice and his fals brother,
And dede hem come to the barre, that oon with that other.
Tho Gamelyn hadde thus y-doon, had he no rest,
Til he had enquered who was on the quest
For to deme his brother, sir Ote, for to honge;
Er he wiste which they were it thoughte ful longe.
But as sone as Gamelyn wiste wher they were,
He dede hem everichone fetere in feere,
And bringen hem to the barre, and sette hem in rewe;
"By my faith!" seyde the justice, "the scherreve is a
Than seyde Gamelyn to the justise, [schrewe."
"Thou hast y-geve domes of the wors assise,
And the twelve sisours that weren of the queste,
They schul ben hanged this day, so have I reste."
Thanne seide the scherreve to yonge Gamelyn,
"Lord, I crie the mercy, brother art thou myn."
"Therfore," seyde Gamelyn, "have thou Cristes curs,
For and thou were maister, yit I schulde have wors."
But for to make short tale, and nought to tarie longe,
He ordeyned him a queste of his men so stronge;
The justice and the scherreve bothe honged hye,
To weyven with ropes and with the wynd drye,
And the twelve sisours, sorwe have that rekke!

Alle they were hanged faste by the nekke.
Thus ended the fals knight with his treccherie,
That ever had i-lad his lyf in falsnes and folye;
He was hanged by the nek, and nought by the purs,
That was the meede that he had for his fadres curs.
Sire Ote was eldest, and Gamelyn was ying,
They wenten with here freendes even to the kyng;
They made pees with the kyng of the best assise.
The kyng loved wel sir Ote and made him a justise.
And after the kyng made Gamelyn, bothe in est and west,
Chef justice of al his fre forest;
Alle his wighte yonge men the kyng forgaf here gilt,
And sitthen in good office the kyng hem hath i-pilt.
Thus wan Gamelyn his lond and his leede,
And wrak him of his enemys, and quyt hem here meede,
And sire Ote his brother made him his heir,
And siththen wedded Gamelyn a wyf bothe good and feyr;
They lyveden togidere whil that Crist wolde,
And sithen was Gamelyn graven under moolde.
And so schal we alle, may ther no man fle:
God bryng us.to the joye that ever schal be!

THE MAN OF LAWES PROLOGE.

Owre Hoste sawh that the brighte sonne
The arke of his artificial day hath i-ronne
The fourthe part, of half an hour and more;
And though he were nat depe expert in lore,
He wist it was the eightetene day

4425.—*eightetene.* This is the reading in which the MSS. seem mostly to agree. The MS. Harl. reads *threttenthe.* Tyrwhitt has *eighte and twenty.*

Of April, that is messanger to May;
And sawe wel that the schade of every tree
Was in the lengthe the same quantité
That was the body erecte, that caused it;
And therfore by the schadwe he took his wit,
That Phebus, which that schoon so fair and bright,
Degrees was five and fourty clombe on hight;
And for that day, as in that latitude,
It was ten of the clokke, he gan conclude;
And sodeynly he plight his hors aboute.
"Lordynges," quod he, "I warne you al the route,
The fourthe party of this day is goon;
Now, for the love of God and of seint Jon,
Leseth no tyme, as forthe as ye may.
Lordynges, the tyme passeth night and day,
And stelith fro us, what pryvely slepyng,
And what thurgh necligence in oure wakyng,
As doth the streem, that torneth never agayn,
Descendyng fro the mounteyn into playn.
Wel can Senek and many philosopher
Bywaylen tyme, more than gold in cofre.
For losse of catel may recovered be,
But losse of tyme schendeth us, quod he.
It wil nat come agayn withoute drede,
Nomore than wol Malkyns maydenhede,
Whan sche had lost it in hir wantownesse.

4440.—*passeth.* Most of the MSS. read *wasteth.*

4450.—*Malkyns maydenhede.* This appears to have been a proverbial saying, and occurs in *Piers Ploughman.*

Let us nat mowlen thus in ydelnesse.
"Sir Man of Lawe," quod he, "so have ye blisse,
Telle us a tale anon, as forward ys.
Ye be submitted thurgh your fre assent
To stonden in this cas at my juggement.
Acquyteth yow, and holdeth youre byheste;
Than have ye doon your devour atte leste."
"Host," quod he, "*depardeux*, I assent;
To breke forward is nat myn entent.
Byheste is dette, and I wol holde fayn
Al my byhest, I can no better sayn.
For such lawe as a man geveth another wight,
He schuld himselve usen it by right.
Thus wol oure text: but natheles certeyn
I can right now non other tale seyn,
That Chaucer, they he can but lewedly
On metres and on rymyng craftely,
Hath seyd hem in such Englisch as he can,
Of olde tyme, as knoweth many man.
And gif he have nought sayd hem, leeve brother,
In o bok, he hath seyd hem in another.
For he hath told of lovers up and doun,
Moo than Ovide made of mencioun
In his Epistelles, that ben so olde.
What schuld I tellen hem, syn they be tolde?
In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcioun,

4477.—*Ceys and Alcioun.* This story forms the introduction to the *Boke of the Duchesse.*

And siththe hath he spoke of everychon
These noble wyfes, and these lovers eeke,
Who so wole his large volume seeke,
Cleped the seintes legende of Cupide:
Ther may he see the large woundes wyde
Of Lucresse, and of Babiloun Tysbee;
The sorwe of Dido for the fals Enee;
The tree of Philles for hir Demephon;
The pleynt of Dyane and of Ermyon,
Of Adrian, and of Ysyphilee;
The barreyn yle stondyng in the see;
The dreynt Leandere for his fayre Erro;
The teeres of Eleyn, and eek the woo
Of Bryxseyde, and of Ledomia;
The cruelte of the queen Medea,
The litel children hangyng by the hals,
For thilke Jason, that was of love so fals.
O Ypermystre, Penollope, and Alceste,
Youre wyfhood he comendeth with the beste.
But certeynly no worde writeth he
Of thilke wikked ensample of Canace,
That loved hir owen brother synfully;

4481.—*Legende of Cupide.* This is the poem more frequently entitled the *Legende of good women.*

4486.—*Dyane.* The MS. Lansd. reads *Dianyre*, which Tyrwhitt adopts. The readings are very various, and not easy to be reconciled.

4498.—*Canace.* This and the story of Apollonius of Tyre are told in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, whence it has been supposed that Chaucer intended here to blame that writer—a notion for which there appears to be no good foundation. The story of Apollonius was very popular in the middle ages, and was published in a variety of forms.

On whiche corsed stories I seye fy;
Or elles of Tyro Appoloneus,
How that the cursed kyng Anteochus
Byreft his doughter of hir maydenhede,
That is so horrible a tale for to reede,
Whan he hir threw upon the pament.
And therfore he of ful avysement
Wolde never wryte in non of his sermouns
Of such unkynde abhominaciouns;
Ne I wol non reherse, if that I may.
But of my tale how schal I do this day?
Me were loth to be lykned douteles
To Muses, that men clepen Pyerides,
(*Methamorphoseos* wot what I mene);
But natheles I recche nat a bene,
They I come after him with hawe-bake,
I speke in prose, and let him rymes make."
And with that word, he with a sobre cheere
Bygan his tale, as ye schal after heere.

THE MAN OF LAWES TALE.

O HATEFUL harm, condicioun of povert,
With thurst, with cold, with honger so confoundyd,

4512.—*Pyerides.* "He rather means, I think, the daughters of Pierus, who contended with the Muses, and were changed into pies. Ovid. Metam. l. v."—*Tyrwhitt.*

The Man of Lawes Tale. This tale was probably taken direct from a French Romance. All the incidents in it are of frequent occurence in medieval stories. The whole story is found in Gower, and a similar story

To asken help it schameth in thin hert,
If thou non aske, with neede so art thou woundyd,
That verray neede unwrappeth al thy wounde hyd,
Maugré thyn heed thou most for indigence
Or stele, or begge, or borwe thy dispence.
Thow blamest Crist, and seyst ful bitterly,
He mysdeparteth riches temporal:
And thyn neyhebour thou wytes synfully,
And seyst thou hast to litel, and he hath al.
Parfay, seystow, som tyme he rekne schal,
Whan that his tayl schal brennen in the gleede,
For he nought helpeth the needful in his neede.
Herkneth what is the sentens of the wyse,
Bet is to dye than have indigence;
Thy selve neyghebour wol the despyse,
If thou be pore, farwel thy reverence.
Yet of the wyse man tak this sentence,

forms the plot of the romance of Emare (printed in Ritson's Metrical Romances). The treachery of king Alla's mother, enters into the French romance of the *Chevalier au cigne*, and into the still more ancient Anglo-Saxon romance of king Offa, preserved in a Latin form by Matthew Paris. It is also found in the Italian collection, said to have been composed in 1378, under the title of *Il Pecorone di ser Giovanni Fiorentino* (an imitation of the Decameron), gior. x, No. 1. The treason of the knight who murders Hermengilde is an incident in the French *Roman de la Violette;* and in the English metrical romance of *Le bone Florence of Rome* (printed in Ritson's collection); and is found in the English *Gesta Romanorum*, c. 69, (ed. Madden), joined in the latter place with Constance's adventure with the steward. It is also found in Vincent of Beauvais, and other writers. Gower's version appears to be taken from the French chronicle of Nicolas Trivet, MS. Arundel, No. 56, fol. 45, v°.

4534.—*Bet is to dye.* This saying of Solomon is quoted in the *Roman de la Rose*, as cited by Tyrwhitt.

Mieux vault mourir que pauvres estre.

Alle the dayes of pore men be wikke,
Be war therfore or thou come to that prikke.
If thou be pore, thy brother hateth the,
And alle thy frendes fleeth fro the, allas!
O riche marchaundz, ful of wele be ye,
O noble prudent folk as in this cas,
Youre bagges beth nat fuld with ambes aas,
But with sys synk, that renneth on your chaunce;
At Crystemasse wel mery may ye daunce.
Ye seeke land and see for youre wynnynges,
As wyse folk as ye knowe alle thastates
Of regnes, ye be fadres of tydynges,
Of tales, bothe of pees and of debates:
I were right now of tales desolat,
Nere that a marchaunt, gon siththen many a yere,
Me taught a tale, which ye schal after heere.
In Surrie dwelled whilom a companye
Of chapmen riche, and therto sad and trewe,
That wyde where sent her spycerye,
Clothes of gold, and satyn riche of hewe.
Her chaffar was so thrifty and so newe,
That every wight had deynté to chaffare
With hem, and eek to selle hem of here ware.
Now fel it, that the maystres of that sort
Han schapen hem to Rome for to wende,
Were it for chapmanhode or for disport,
Non other message nolde they thider sende,
But came hemself to Rome, this is the ende:
And in such place as thought hem avauntage

For here entent, they tooke her herburgage.
Sojourned have these marchauntz in the toun
A certeyn tyme, as fel to here plesaunce:
But so bifell, that thexcellent renoun
Of themperoures doughter dame Custaunce
Reported was, with every circumstaunce,
Unto these Surrienz marchauntz, in such wyse
Fro day to day, as I schal you devyse.
This was the comyn voys of every man:
"Oure emperour of Rome, God him see!
A doughter hath, that, sith the world bygan,
To rekne as wel hir goodnes as hir bewté,
Nas never such another as was sche:
I prey to God hir save and susteene,
And wolde sche were of al Europe the queene.
"In hire is hye bewté, withoute pryde,
Yowthe, withoute grefhed or folye:
To alle hire werkes vertu is hire gyde;
Humblesse hath slayne in hir tyrrannye:
Sche is myrour of alle curtesye,
Hir herte is verrey chambre of holynesse,
Hir hond mynistre of fredom and almesse."
And al this voys is soth, as God is trewe.
But now to purpos let us turne agein:
These marchantz have don fraught here schippes newe,
And whan they have this blisful mayde seyn,
Home to Surrey be they went agein,
And doon here needes, as they have don yore,
And lyven in wele, I can you say no more.

Now fel it, that these marchauntz stooden in grace
Of him that was the sowdan of Surrye:
For whan they come fro eny straunge place,
He wolde of his benigne curtesye
Make hem good chere, and busily aspye
Tydynges of sondry regnes, for to lere
The wordes that they mighte seen and heere.
Among other thinges specially
These marchauntz him told of dame Constaunce
So gret noblesse, in ernest so ryally,
That this sowdan hath caught so gret plesaunce
To have hir figure in his remembraunce,
That al his lust, and al his besy cure,
Was for to love hir, whiles his lyf may dure.
Paraventure in thilke large booke,
Which that is cleped the heven, i-write was
With sterres, whan that he his burthe took,
That he for love schulde have his deth, allas!
For in the sterres, clerere then is glas,
Is wryten, God woot, who so cowthe it rede,
The deth of every man, withouten drede.
In sterres many a wynter therbyfore,

4614.—*in the sterres.* See before, l. 2039. Chaucer seems to have had in his eye in the following stanza a passage of the *Megacosmus* of Bernardus Silvestris, a rather popular Latin poet of the twelfth century. Some of these lines are quoted in the margin of MS. Lansd.

Præjacet in stellis series, quam longior ætas
Explicet et spatiis temporis ordo suis,
Sceptra Phoronei, fratrum discordia Thebis,
Flamma Phaethontis, Deucalionis aquæ.
In stellis Codri paupertas, copia Crœsi,

Was write the deth of Ector and Achilles,
Of Pompé, Julius, er they were i-bore;
The stryf of Thebes, and of Ercules,
Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates
The deth; but mennes wittes ben so dulle,
That no wight can wel rede it at the fulle.
This sowdan for his pryvé counseil sent,
And schortly of this mater for to pace,
He hath to hem declared his entent,
And seyd hem certeyn, but he might have grace
To have Constance withinne a litel space,
He nas but deed, and charged hem in hyghe
To schapen for his lyf som remedye.
Dyverse men divers thinges seyde,
The argumentes casten up and doun;
Many a subtyl resoun forth they leyden;
They spekyn of magike, and of abusioun;
But fynally, as in conclusioun,
They can nought seen in that non avauntage,
Ne in non other wey, save in mariage.
Than sawgh they therin such difficulté
By wey of resoun, to speke it al playn,

Incestus Paridis, Hippolytique pudor.
In stellis Priami species, audacia Turni,
Sensus Ulyxeus, Herculeusque vigor.
In stellis pugil est Pollux, et navita Typhis,
Et Cicero rhetor, et geometra Thales.
In stellis lepidum dictat Maro, Milo figurat,
Fulgurat in Latia nobilitate Nero,
Astra notat Persis, Ægyptus parturit artes,
Græcia docta legit, prælia Roma gerit.

Bycause that ther was such dyversté
Bitwen here bothe lawes, as they sayn,
They trowe that "no cristen prince wold fayn
Wedden his child under our lawe swete,
That us was taught by Mahoun oure prophete."
And he answerde: "Rather than I lese
Constance, I wol be cristen douteles:
I moot be heres, I may non other cheese,
I pray you haldeth your arguments in pees,
Saveth my lyf, and beth nat recheles.
Goth, geteth hire that hath my lyf in cure,
For in this wo I may no lenger dure."
What needeth gretter dilatacioun?
I say, by tretys and ambassatrye,
And by the popes mediacioun,
And al the chirche, and al the chyvalrye,
That in destruccioun of mawmetrye,
And in encresse of Cristes lawe deere,
They ben acordid as ye schal after heere;
How that the soudan and his baronage,
And alle his lieges schuld i-crystned be,
And he schal have Constance in mariage,
And certeyn gold, I not what quantité,
And therfore founden they suffisant seurté.
This same acord was sworn on every syde;
Now, fair Constance, almighty God the guyde!
Now wolde som men wayten, as I gesse,
That I schulde tellen al the purvyaunce,
That themperour of his gret noblesse

Hath schapen for his doughter dame Constaunce.
Wel may men knowe that so gret ordynaunce
May no man telle in so litel a clause,
As was arrayed for so high a cause.
Bisschops ben schapen with hir for to wende,
Lordes, ladyes, and knightes of renoun,
And other folk ynowe, this is the ende.
And notefied is thurghout the toun,
That every wight with gret devocioun
Schulde preye Crist, that he this mariage
Receyve in gree, and spede this viage.
The day is come of hire departyng,
(I say the woful day that than is come)
That ther may be no lenger taryyng,
But forthe-ward they dresse hem alle and some.
Constance, that with sorwe is overcome,
Ful pale arist, and dresseth hir to wende,
For wel sche saugh ther nas non other ende.
Allas! what wonder is it though sche wepte,
That schal be sent to straunge nacioun,
Fro freendes, that so tenderly hir kepte,
And to be bounde undur subjeccioun
Of oon sche knew nat his condicioun?
Housbondes ben al goode, and han be yore;
That knowen wyfes, I dar say no more.
"Fader," sche seid, "thy wrecched child Constaunce,
Thy yonge doughter fostred up so softe,
And ye, my mooder, my soverayn plesaunce
Over al thing, outaken Crist on lofte,

Constaunce your child hir recomaundeth ofte
Unto your grace; for I schal into Surrye,
Ne schal I never see you more with ye.
"Allas! unto the Barbre nacioun
I most anoon, sethens it is your wille:
But Crist, that starf for our redempcioun,
So geve me grace his hestes to fulfille,
I, wrecched womman, no fors they I spille!
Wommen ben born to thraldam and penaunce,
And to ben under mannes governaunce."
I trowe at Troye whan Pirrus brak the wal,
Or Yleon that brend Thebes the citee,
Ne at Rome for the harme thurgh Hanibal,
That Romayns hath venquysshed tymes thre,
Nas herd such tender wepyng for pité,
As in the chambur was for hir partyng:
But forth sche moot, whether sche weep or syng.
O firste mevyng cruel firmament,
With thi diurnal swough that crowdest ay,
And hurlest al fro est to occident,
That naturelly wold hold another way;
Thyn crowdyng sette the heven in such array
At the bygynnyng of this fiers viage,
That cruel Martz hath slayn this marriage.

4715.—*firste mevyng.* The following note is written in the margin of the Lansd. MS. "Unde Tholomeus, libro primo, capitulo 8: Primi motus cœli duo sunt, quorum unus est qui movet totum semper ab oriente in occidentem, uno modo super orbes, etc. Alter vero motus est qui movet orbem stellarum currentium contra motum primum, viz. ab occidente in orientem super alios duos polos, etc."

Infortunat ascendent tortuous,
Of which the lordes helples falle, allas!
Out of his angle into the derkest hous.
O Mariz Attezere, as in this caas;
O feble moone, unhappy been thi paas,
Thou knettest the ther thou art nat receyved,
Ther thou were wel fro thennes artow weyved.
Inprudent emperour of Rome, allas!
Was ther no philosopher in al thy toun?
Is no tyme bet than other in such caas?
Of viage is ther noon eleccioun,
Namly to folk of heigh condicioun,
Nought whan a roote is of a birthe i-knowe?
Allas! we ben to lewed, and eek to slowe.
To schippe is brought this woful faire mayde
Solempnely, with every circumstaunce:
"Now Jhesu Crist so be with you," sche sayde.
Ther nys nomor, but farwel, fair Custaunce;
Sohe peyneth hire to make good contienaunce.
And forth I lete hire sayle in this manere,
And torne I wol agein to my matiere.

4725.—*O Mariz Attezere.* The readings of the MSS. vary much. Tyrwhitt reads *O Mars, O Atyzar.* I have followed the Harl. MS. It would require a deeper knowledge of medieval astrology than I possess, to correct it with any certainty, or to determine if it need correction.

4732.—*eleccioun.* The marginal note in the Lansd. MS. quoted above, adds, "Omnes enim sunt concordati quod electiones sint debiles, nisi in divitibus: habent enim isti, licet debilitentur eorum electiones, radicem, i. e. nativitates eorum quæ confortant omnem planetam debilem in itinere: hæc philosophus." Tyrwhitt gives this from another MS. It is taken from the *Liber electionum* of Zahel, of which there is a copy in MS. Harl. No. 80. The above passage occurs at fol. 68, v°.

The moder of the sowdan, ful of vices,
Aspyed hath hir sones playn entente,
How he wol lete his olde sacrifices:
And right anoon sche for hir counseil sent,
And they ben come, to knowe what sche ment;
And whan assembled was this folk in fere,
Sche sette hir doun, and sayd as ye schal heere.
"Lordes," quod sche, "ye knowen everichon,
How that my sone in poynt is for to lete
The holy lawes of oure Alkaroun,
Geven by Goddes messangere Makamete:
But oon avow to grete God I hete,
The lyf schuld rather out of my body stert,
Or Makametes law go out of myn hert.
"What schal us tyden of this newe lawe
But thraldam to oure body and penaunce,
And afterward in helle to be drawe,
For we reneyed Mahound oure creaunce?
But, lordes, wol ye maken assuraunce,
As I schal say, assentyng to my lore?
And I schal make us sauf for evermore."
They sworen and assenten every man
To lyf with hir and dye, and by hir stonde:
And everich in the beste wise he can
To strengthen hir schal al his frendes fonde.

4752.—*Alkaroun.* The Koran was translated into Latin in the twelfth century, and it, and the history of its author, Muhammed, were subjects of interest in the West.

And sche hath emperise take on honde,
Which ye schul heere that I schal devyse,
And to hem alle sche spak in this wyse.
"We schul first feyne ous cristendom to take;
Cold watir schal nat greve us but a lite:
And I schal such a fest and revel make,
That, as I trow, I schal the sowdan quyte.
For though his wyf be cristned never so white,
Sche schal have need to waissche away the rede,
They sche a font of watir with hir lede."
O sowdones, root of iniquité,
Virago thou Semyram the secounde,
O serpent under feminité,
Lyk to the serpent deep in helle i-bounde:
O feyned womman, alle that may confounde
Vertu and innocence, thurgh thy malice,
Is bred in the, as nest of every vice.
O Satan envyous, syn thilke day
That thou were chased fro oure heritage,
Wel knewest thou to wommen the olde way.
Thou madest Eve to bryng us in servage,
Thou wolt fordoon this cristen mariage:
Thyn instrument so (weylaway the while!)
Makestow of wommen whan thou wolt bygyle.
This sowdones, whom I thus blame and wary,
Let prively hir counseil gon his way:
What schuld I in this tale lenger tary?
Sche rideth to the soudan on a day,
And seyd him, that sche wold reney hir lay,

And cristendam of prestes handes fonge,
Repentyng hir sche hethen was so longe;
Bysechyng him to doon hir that honour,
That sche most have the cristen men to feste:
"To plesen hem I wil do my labour."
The sowdan seith, "I wol do at your heste,"
And knelyng, thanketh hir of that requeste;
So glad he was, he nyst nat what to seye.
Sche kyst hir sone, and hom sche goth hir weye.
Arryved ben the cristen folk to londe
In Surry, with a gret solempne route,
And hastily this sowdan sent his sonde,
First to his moder, and al the regne aboute,
And seyd, his wyf was comen out of doute,
And preyeth hir for to ride agein the queene,
The honour of his regne to susteene.
Gret was the prees, and riche was tharray
Of Surriens and Romayns mette in feere.
The mooder of the sowdan riche and gay
Receyved hir with al so glad a cheere,
As eny mooder might hir doughter deere:
And to the nexte citee ther bysyde
A softe paas solempnely thay ryde.
Nought trow I the triumphe of Julius,
Of which that Lukan maketh moche bost,
Was ryaller, ne more curious,
Than was thassemblé of this blisful oost:
But this scorpioun, this wikked goost,
The sowdones, for al hir flateryng,

Cast under this ful mortally to styng.
The sowdan comth himself sone after this
So really, that wonder is to telle:
And welcometh hir with al joy and blys.
And thus with mirth and joy I let hem dwelle.
The fruyt of this matier is that I telle.
Whan tyme com, men thought it for the best
That revel stynt, and men goon to her rest.
The tyme com, the olde sowdonesse
Ordeyned hath this fest of which I told;
And to the feste cristen folk hem dresse
In general, bothe yong and old.
Ther men may fest and realté byholde,
And deyntés mo than I can of devyse,
But al to deere they bought it ar they ryse.
O sodeyn wo! that ever art successour
To worldly blis, spreynd is with bitternesse
The ende of oure joye, of oure worldly labour:
Wo occupieth the fyn of oure gladnesse
Herken this counseil for thyn sikernesse:
Upon thyn glade dayes have in thi mynde
The unwar woo that cometh ay bihynde.
For schortly for to tellen at o word,

4847.—*unwar woo.* This is a good example of the manner in which corruptions of the text gain ground. Some one had apparently given *or harm*, as a marginal gloss to *woo*; another scribe copied this into the text, and some MSS. (as the Lansd. MS. and one of the Cambridge MSS.) have *unwar wo or harme*. This was again altered to make apparent sense, and Tyrwhitt has the line,—

The unware wo of harm, that cometh behinde.

The sowdan and the cristen everichone
Ben al to-hewe and stiked atte bord,
But it were dame Constaunce allone.
This olde sowdones, this cursed crone,
Hath with hir frendes doon this cursed dede,
For sche hirself wold al the contré lede.

Ne ther was Surrien noon that was converted,
That of the counseil of the sowdon woot,
That he nas al to-hewe or he asterted;
And Constaunce have they take anon foot-hoot,
And in a schippe, stereles, God it woot,
They have hir set, and bad hir lerne to sayle
Out of Surry agein-ward to Ytaile.

A certein tresour that sche thider ladde,
And, soth to sayn, vitaile gret plenté,
They have hir geven, and clothes eek sche hadde,
And forth sche sayleth in the salte see.
O my Constaunce, ful of benignité,
O emperoures yonge doughter deere,
He that is lord of fortun be thi steere!

Sche blesseth hir, and with ful pitous voys
Unto the croys of Crist than seyde sche:
"O cler, O welful auter, holy croys,
Red of the lambes blood, ful of pité,
That wissh the world fro old iniquité,
Me fro the feend and fro his clowes keepe,
That day that I schal drenchen in the deepe.

"Victorious tre, protecciouu of trewe,
That oonly were worthy for to bere

The kyng of heven, with his woundes newe,
The white lamb, that hurt was with a spere;
Flemer of feendes, out of him and here
On which thy lymes feithfully extenden,
Me kepe, and gif me might my lyf to menden."
Yeres and dayes flette this creature
Thurghout the see of Grece, into the strayte
Of Marrok, as it was hir adventure:
O many a sory mele may sche bayte,
After hir deth ful ofte may sche wayte,
Or that the wilde wawe wol hir dryve
Unto the place ther as sche schal arryve.
Men mighten aske, why sche was nought slayn?
Ek at the fest who might hir body save?
And I answer to that demaunde agayn,
Who saved Daniel in thorrible cave,
That every wight, sauf he, mayster or knave,
Was with the lioun frete, or he asterte?
No wight but God, that he bar in his herte.
God lust to schewe his wondurful miracle
In hir, for we schuld seen his mighty werkes:
Crist, which that is to every harm triacle,
By certeyn menes ofte, as knowen clerkes,
Doth thing for certeyn ende, that ful derk is
To mannes witt, that for our ignoraunce
Ne can nought knowe his prudent purvyaunce.
Now sith sche was nat at the fest i-slawe,
Who kepte hir fro drenching in the see?
Who kepte Jonas in the fisches mawe,

Til he was spouted up at Ninive?
Wel may men knowe, it was no wight but he
That kept the pepul Ebrayk fro her drenchyng,
With drye feet thurghout the see passyng.
  Who badde foure spiritz of tempest,
That power han to noyen land and see,
Bothe north and south, and also west and est,
Anoyen neyther londe, see, ne tree?
Sothly the comaunder of that was he
That fro the tempest ay this womman kepte,
As wel when sche awok as when sche slepte.
  Wher might this womman mete and drinke have?
Thre yer and more, how lasteth hir vitaille?
Who fedde the Egipcien Marie in the cave,
Or in desert? no wight but Crist *saunz faile*.
Fyf thousand folk it was a gret mervaile
With loves fyf and fissches tuo to feede:
God sent his foysoun at her grete neede.
  Sche dryveth forth into oure occean
Thurghout oure wilde see, til atte last
Under an holte, that nempnen I ne can,
Fer in Northumberland, the wawe hir cast,
And in the sand the schip styked so fast,
That thennes wold it nought in al a tyde:
The wille of Crist was that sche schold abyde.
  The constabil of the castel doun is fare
To se this wrak, and al the schip he sought,

4927.—*that nempnen I ne can.* The MS. reads *that men nempne can.*

And fond this wery womman ful of care;
He fand also the tresour that sche brought;
In hir langage mercy sche bisought,
The lif out of hir body for to twynne,
Hir to delyver of woo that sche was inne.
A maner Latyn corupt was hir speche,
But algates therby sche was understonde.
The constabil, whan him lust no lenger seche,
This woful womman broughte he to londe.
Sche kneleth doun, and thanketh Goddes sonde;
But what sche was, sche wolde no man seye
For foul ne faire, though sche scholde deye.
Sche was, sche seyd, so mased in the see,
That sche forgat hir mynde, by hire trowthe.
The constable had of hir so gret pitee,
And eek his wyf, they wepeden for routhe:
Sche was so diligent withouten slouthe
To serve and plese ever in that place,
That alle hir loven that loken on hir face.
The constable and dame Hermegyld his wyf,
To telle you playne, payenes bothe were;
But Hermegyld loved Constance as hir lyf;
And Constance hath so long herberwed there

4939.—*a maner Latyn corupt.* In the romance of Fulke fitz Warine, (p. 91), where a pretended merchant from the East comes to London, we are told,—"Et quanqu'il parla fust *Latyn corupt*; mès le meir le entendy bien."

4954.—Tyrwhitt gives (from other MSS.) instead of this line,—

Were payenes, and that contree every wher.

The Harl. MS. has *in peynes* for *payenes*.

In orisoun, with many a bitter teere,
Til Jhesu hath converted thurgh his grace
Dame Hermegyld, the constables of the place.
In al the lond no cristen men durst route;
Al cristen men ben fled from that contré
Thurgh payens, that conquered al aboute
The places of the north by land and see.
To Wales fled the cristianité
Of olde Britouns, dwellyng in this yle;
Ther was hir refut for the mene while.
But yit nere cristen Britouns so exiled,
That ther nere some in here pryvité
Honoured Crist, and hethen folk bygiled;
And neigh the castel such ther dwellid thre:
That oon of hem was blynd, and might nat se,
But if it were with eyen of his mynde,
With which men seen after that they ben blynde.
Bright was the sonne, as in someres day,
For which the constable and his wif also
And Constaunce had take the righte way
Toward the see, a forlong wey or two,
To pleyen, and to romen to and fro;
And in that walk this blynde man they mette,
Croked and olde, with eyen fast y-schette.
"In name of Crist," cryed this old Britoun,
"Dame Hermegyld, gif me my sight ageyn!"
This lady wax affrayed of the soun,
Lest that hir houseband, schortly to sayn,
Wold hir for Jhesu Cristes love have slayn,

Til Constaunce made hir bold, and bad hir werche
The wil of Crist, as doughter of holy chirche.
The constable wax abaisshed of that sight,
And sayde, "What amounteth al this fare?"
Constaunce answered, "Sir, it is Cristes might,
That helpeth folk out of the feendes snare."
And so ferforth sche gan hir lay declare,
That sche the constable, er that it was eve,
Converted, and on Crist made him bileve.
This constable was not lord of the place
Of which I speke, ther he Constance fond,
But kept it strongly many a wynter space
Under Alla, kyng of Northumberlond,
That was ful wys, and worthy of his hond,
Agein the Scottes, as men may wel heere.
But tourne agein I wil to my mateere.
Satan, that ever us wayteth to begile,
Sawe of Constaunce al hir perfeccioun,
And cast anoon how he might quyt hir while;
And made a yong knight, that dwelt in the toun,
Love hir so hoot of foul affeccioun,
That verrayly him thought he schulde spille,
But he of hire oones had his wille.
He wowith hir, but it avayleth nought,
Sche wolde do no synne by no weye;
And for despyt, he compassed in his thought
To maken hir a schamful deth to deye.
He wayteth whan the constable was aweye,
And pryvyly upon a nyght he crepte

In Hermyngyldes chambre whil sche slepte.
Wery, for-waked in here orisoun,
Slepeth Constaunce, and Hermyngyld also.
This knight, thurgh Satanas temptacioun,
Al softely is to the bed y-go,
And kutte the throte of Hermegild a-two,
And leyd the bloody knyf by dame Constaunce,
And went his way, ther God geve him meschaunce.
Sone after comth this constable hom agayn,
And eek Alla, that kyng was of that lond,
And say his wyf dispitously i-slayn,
For which ful oft he wept and wrong his hond;
And in the bed the blody knyf he fond
By dame Custaunce: allas! what might she say?
For verray woo hir witt was al away.
To king Alla was told al this meschaunce,
And eek the tyme, and wher, and in what wyse
That in a schip was founden this Constaunce,
As here bifore ye have herd me devyse:
The kinges hert of pité gan agrise,
Whan he saugh so benigne a creature
Falle in disese and in mysaventure.
For as the lomb toward his deth is brought,

5015. — *Hermyngyldes.* The orthography of the name varies in different MSS. MS. Lansd. has *Ermenilda*: the two Cambridge MSS. used by me have, one, *Hermenchildes*, the other *Hermengilde*. It is the Saxon *Eormengild*, which was the name of one of the daughters of Earconbehrt, king of Kent. See *Florence of Worcester*. Perhaps this romance existed in a Teutonic or even Anglo-Saxon original.

So stant this innocent bifore the kyng:
This false knight, that hath this tresoun wrought,
Bereth hir an hand that sche hath don this thing:
But nevertheles ther was gret murmuryng
Among the poeple, and seyn they can not gesse
That sche had doon so gret a wikkednesse.
For they han seyen hir so vertuous,
And lovyng Hermegyld right as hir lyf:
Of this bar witnesse everich in that hous,
Save he that Hermegyld slowgh with his knyf.
This gentil kyng hath caught a gret motyf
Of his witnesse, and thought he wold enquere
Depper in this cas, a trouthe to lere.
Allas! Constaunce, thou ne has no champioun,
Ne fighte canstow nat, so welaway!
But he that for oure redempcioun
Bonde Sathan, and yit lith ther he lay,
So be thy stronge champioun this day:
For but Crist upon the miracle kythe,
Withouten gilt thou schalt be slayn as swithe.
Sche set hir doun on knees, and than sche sayde,
"Immortal God, that savedest Susanne
Fro false blame; and thou, mercyful mayde,
Mary I mene, doughter of seint Anne,
Bifore whos child aungeles syng Osanne;
If I be gultles of this felonye,
My socour be, for elles schal I dye!"
Have ye not seye som tyme a pale face,
Among a prees, of him that hath be lad

Toward his deth, wher him geyneth no grace,
And such a colour in his face hath had,
Men mighte knowe his face was so bystad,
Among alle the faces in that route ;
So stant Constance, and loketh hire aboute.
O queenes lyvyng in prosperité,
Duchesses, and ye ladies everychon,
Haveth som reuthe on hir adversité ;
An emperoures doughter stond allon ;
Sche nath no wight to whom to make hir moon ;
O blod ryal, that stondest in this drede,
Ferre be thy frendes at thy grete neede !
This Alla kyng hath such compassioun,
As gentil hert is fulfild of pité,
That from his eyen ran the water doun.
"Now hastily do fech a book," quod he ;
"And if this knight wil swere how that sche
This womman slowgh, yet wol we us avyse,
Whom that we wille schal be oure justise."
A Britoun book, i-write with Evaungiles,
Was fette, and on this book he swor anoon
Sche gultif was; and in the mene whiles
An hond him smot upon the nekke boon,
That doun he fel anon right as a stoon :
And bothe his yen brast out of his face,
In sight of every body in that place.

5067.—*him geyneth.* Some of the MSS. have *him geteth. Him*, in cases like this, answers to the Latin dative *sibi*: he gaineth *for himself.*

A vois was herd, in general audience,
And seid, " Thou hast disclaundred gulteles
The doughter of holy chirche in hire presence;
Thus hastow doon, and yit I holde my pees."
Of this mervaile agast was al the prees,
As mased folk they stooden everychon
For drede of wreche, save Custaunce allon.
Gret was the drede and eek the repentaunce
Of hem that hadden wrong suspeccioun
Upon the sely innocent Custaunce;
And for this miracle, in conclusioun,
And by Custaunces mediacioun,
The kyng, and many other in the place,
Converted was, thanked be Cristes grace!
This false knight was slayn for his untrouthe
By juggement of Alla hastyly;
And yit Custaunce hath of his deth gret routhe.
And after this Jhesus of his mercy
Made Alla wedde ful solempnely
This holy mayde, that is bright and schene,
And thus hath Crist i-maad Constance a queene.
But who was woful, if I schal not lye,
Of this weddyng but Domegild and no mo,
The kynges mooder, ful of tyrannye?
Hir thought hir cursed herte brast a-two;
Sche wolde nat hir sone had i-do so;
Hir thought despyte, that he schulde take
So straunge a creature unto his make.
Me lust not of the caf ne of the stree

Make so long a tale, as of the corn.
What schuld I telle of the realté
Of this mariage, or which cours goth biforn,
Who bloweth in a trompe or in an horn?
The fruyt of every tale is for to seye;
They ete and drynk, and daunce, and synge, and pleye.
They gon to bed, as it was skile and right;
For though that wyfes ben ful holy thinges,
They moste take in pacience a-night
Such maner necessaries, as ben plesynges
To folk that han i-wedded hem with rynges,
And halvendel her holynesse ley aside
As for the tyme, it may non other betyde.
On hire he gat a knave child anoon,
And to a bisschope, and to his constable eeke,
He took his wyf to kepe, whan he is goon
To Scotlond-ward, his foomen for to seeke.
Now faire Custaunce, that is so humble and meeke,
So long is goon with childe til that stille
Sche held hir chambre, abidyng Goddes wille.
The tyme is come, a knave child sche bere:
Mauricius atte funtstone men him calle.
This constabil doth come forth a messager,
And wrot to his kyng that cleped was Alle,
How that this blisful tydyng is bifalle,
And other thinges spedful for to seye.
He taketh the lettre, and forth he goth his weye.

5143.—*Mauricius.* The MS. Harl. reads *Maurius*, by an error of the scribe.

This messanger, to doon his avauntage,
Unto the kynges moder he goth ful swithe,
And saluëth hire fair in his langage.
"Madame," quod he, "ye may be glad and blithe,
And thanke God an hundred thousand sithe;
My lady queen hath child, withouten doute,
To joye and blis of al the reame aboute.
"Lo heer the lettres sealed of this thing,
That I mot bere with al the hast I may:
If ye wole ought unto youre sone the kyng,
I am youre servaunt bothe night and day."
Doungyld answerde, "As now this tyme, nay:
But here al nyght I wol thou take thy rest,
To morwen I wil say the what me lest."
This messanger drank sadly ale and wyn,
And stolen were his lettres pryvely
Out of his box, whil he sleep as a swyn;
And countrefeet they were subtily;
Another sche him wroot ful synfully,
Unto the kyng direct of this matiere
Fro his constable, as ye schul after heere.
The lettre spak, the queen delyvered was
Of so orryble and feendly creature,
That in the castel noon so hardy was
That eny while dorste therin endure:
The mooder was an elf by aventure
Bycome by charmes or by sorcerie,
And every man hatith hir companye.
Wo was this kyng whan he this letter had sein,
But to no wight he told his sorwes sore,

But of his owen hand he wrot agayn;
"Welcome the sond of Crist for everemore
To me, that am now lerned in this lore:
Lord, welcome be thy lust and thy pleasaunce!
My lust I putte al in thyn ordinaunce.
"Kepeth this child, al be it foul or fair,
And eek my wyf, unto myn hom comyng:
Crist whan him lust may sende me an hair
More agreable than this to my likyng."
This lettre he seleth, pryvyly wepyng,
Which to the messager he took ful sone,
And forth he goth, ther nys no more to done.
O messager, fulfild of dronkenesse,
Strong is thy breth, thy lymes faltren ay,
And thou bywreyest alle sykernesse;
Thy mynde is lorn, thou janglest as a jay;
Thy face is torned al in a newe array;
Ther drunkenesse regneth in eny route,
Ther is no counseil hid withouten doute.
O Domegyld, I have non Englisch digne
Unto thy malice and thy tyrannye:
And therfor to the feend I the resigne,
Let him endyten of thi treccherie.
Fy, mannyssch, fy!—o nay, by God, I lye;
Fy, feendly spirit, for I dar wel telle,
Though thou here walke, thy spirit is in helle.
This messanger comth fro the kyng agayn,
And at the kinges modres court he light,
And sche was of this messenger ful fayn,

And pleseth him in al that ever sche might.
He drank, and wel his gurdel underpight;
He slepeth, and he fareth in his gyse
Al nyght, unto the sonne gan arise.
Eft were his lettres stolen everichon,
And countrefeted lettres in this wise:
"The kyng comaundeth his constable anon
Up peyne of hangyng and of heigh justise,
That he ne schulde suffre in no maner wyse
Constaunce in his regne for to abyde
Thre dayes, and a quarter of a tyde;
"But in the same schip as he hir fond,
Hire and hir yonge sone, and al hire gere,
He schulde putte, and crowde fro the londe,
And charge hire, that sche never eft come there."
O my Constaunce, wel may thy goost have fere,
And slepyng in thy drem ben in penaunce,
Whan Domegel cast al this ordynaunce.
This messanger a-morwe, whan he awook,
Unto the castel held the nexte way;
And to the constable he the lettre took;
And whan that he the pitous lettre say,
Ful ofte he seyd allas and welaway;
"Lord Crist," quod he, "how may this world endure?
So ful of synne is many a creature!
"O mighty God, if that it be thy wille,
Seth thou art rightful jugge, how may this be
That thou wolt suffre innocentz to spille,
And wikked folk regne in prosperité?

O good Constance, allas! so wo is me,
That I moot be thy tormentour, or deye
On schamful deth, ther is non other weye."
Wepen bothe yong and olde in al that place,
Whan that the kyng this corsed lettre sent:
And Constance with a dedly pale face
The fayre day toward hir schip sche went:
But nevertheles sche taketh in good entent
The wil of Christ, and knelyng on the grounde
Sche sayde, "Lord, ay welcome be thy sonde!
"He that me kepte fro the false blame,
Whil I was on the lond amonges you,
He can me kepe from harm and eek fro schame
In the salt see, although I se nat how:
As strong as ever he was, he is right now,
In him trust I, and in his mooder deere,
That is to me my sayl and eek my steere."
Hir litel child lay wepyng in hir arm,
And knelyng pitously to him sche sayde:
"Pees, litel sone, I wol do the noon harm."
With that hir kerchef of hir hed sche brayde,
And over his litel yghen sche it layde,
And in hir arm sche lullith it wel faste,
And unto heven hir eyghen up sche caste.
"Moder," quod sche, "and mayde bright, Marie,
Soth is, that thurgh wommannes eggement
Mankynde was lorn and dampned ay to dye,

5243.—*fayre*. Tyrwhitt has *fourthe*, perhaps correctly.

For which thy child was on a cros to-rent:
Thyn blisful eyghen sawh al this torment;
Then nys ther noon comparisoun bitwene
Thy wo, and any woo may man sustene.
"Thow saugh thy child i-slaw byfor thyn yen,
And yit now lyveth my litel child, parfay!
Now, lady bright, to whom alle woful cryen,
Thou glory of wommanhod, thou faire may,
Thou heven of refute, brighte sterre of day,
Rewe on my child, that of thyn gentilnesse
Rewest on every synful in destresse.
"O litel child, allas! what is thi gilt,
That never wroughtest synne as yet, pardé?
Why wil thyn harde fader han the spilt?
O mercy, deere constable," seyde sche,
"And let my litel child here dwelle with the:
And if thou darst not saven him for blame,
So kys him oones in his fadres name."
Therwith sche loketh bak-ward to the lond,
And seyde, "Farwel, housbond rewtheles!"
And up sche rist, and walketh doun the stronde
Toward the schip, hir folweth al the prees:
And ever sche preyeth hir child to hold his pees,
And took hir leve, and with an holy entent
Sche blesseth hire, and to the schip sche went,
Vytailled was the schip, it is no drede,
Abundauntly for hire a ful longe space:
And other necessaries that schulde nede
Sche had ynowgh, heryed be Cristez grace:

For wynd and water almighty God purchace,
And bryng hir hom, I can no bettre say;
But in the see sche dryveth forth hir way.
Alla the kyng comth hom soon after this
Unto the castel, of the which I tolde,
And asketh wher his wyf and his child ys.
The constable gan aboute his herte colde,
And playnly al the maner he him tolde
As ye han herd, I can telle it no better,
And schewed the kynges seal and his letter;
And seyde, "Lord, as ye comaunded me
Up peyne of deth, so have I do certayn."
This messager tormented was, til he
Moste biknowe and telle it plat and playn,
Fro nyght to night in what place he had layn:
And thus by witt and subtil enqueryng
Ymagined was by wham this gan to spryng.
The hand was knowen that the lettre wroot,
And al the venym of this cursed dede;
But in what wyse, certeynly I noot.
Theffect is this, that Alla, out of drede,
His moder slough, as men may pleynly reede,
For that sche traytour was to hir ligeaunce:
Thus endeth olde Domegild with meschaunce.
The sorwe that this Alla night and day
Makth for his wyf and for his child also,
Ther is no tonge that it telle may.
But now I wol unto Custaunce go,
That fleeteth in the see in peyne and wo

Fyve yeer and more, as liked Cristes sonde,
Er that hir schip approched unto londe.
Under an hethen castel atte last,
Of which the name in my text nought I fynde,
Constaunce and eek hir child the see upcast.
Almighty God, that saveth al mankynde,
Have on Constaunce and on hir child som mynde!
That fallen is in hethen hond eftsone,
In poynt to spille, as I schal telle you soone.
Doun fro the castel cometh many a wight,
To gawren on this schip, and on Constaunce:
But schortly fro the castel on a night,
The lordes styward, God give him meschaunce!
A theef that had reneved oure creaunce,
Com into schip alone, and seyd he scholde
Hir lemman be, whethir sche wold or nolde.
Wo was this wrecched womman tho bigoon,
Hire childe crieth and sche pytously:
But blisful Mary hilp hir right anoon,
For with hir stroglyng wel and mightily
The theef fel over boord al sodeinly,
And in the see he drenched for vengaunce,
And thus hath Crist unwemmed kept Constance.
O foule lust, o luxurie, lo thin ende!
Nought oonly that thou feyntest mannes mynde,
But verrayly thou wolt his body schende.
The ende of thyn werk, or of thy lustes blynde,

5341.—*stroglyng*. The MS. Harl. reads *strengthe*.

Is compleynyng: how many may men fynde,
That nought for werk som tyme, but for thentent
To doon this synne, ben eyther slayn or schent!
How may this weyke womman han the strengthe
Hir to defende agein this renegat?
O Golias, unmesurable of lengthe,
How mighte David make the so mate?
So yong, and of armure so desolate,
How dorst he loke upon thyn dredful face?
Wel may men seyn, it nas but Goddes grace.
Who gaf Judith corage or hardynesse
To slen him Olefernes in his tent,
And to delyveren out of wrecchednes
The peple of God? I say in this entent,
That right as God spiryte and vigor sent
To hem, and saved hem out of meschaunce,
So sent he might and vigor to Constaunce.
Forth goth hir schip thurghout the narwe mouth
Of Jubalter and Septé, dryvyng alway,
Som tyme west, and som tyme north and south,
And som tyme est, ful many a wery day:
Til Cristes mooder, blessed be sche ay!
Hath schapen thurgh hir endeles goodnesse
To make an ende of hir hevynesse.
Now let us stynt of Constance but a throwe,
And speke we of the Romayn emperour,
That out of Surrye hath by lettres knowe
The slaughter of cristen folk, and deshonour
Doon to his doughter by a fals traytour,

I mene the cursed wikked sowdenesse,
That at the fest leet slee bothe more and lesse.
For which this emperour hath sent anoon
His senatours, with real ordynaunce,
And other lordes, God wot, many oon,
On Surriens to take high vengaunce:
They brenne, sleen, and bringen hem to meschaunce
Ful many a day: but schortly this is thende,
Hom-ward to Rome they schapen hem to wende.
This senatour repayreth with victorie
To Rome-ward, saylyng ful really,
And mette the schip dryvyng, as seth the story,
In which Constance sitteth ful pitously:
Nothing ne knew he what sche was, ne why
Sche was in such aray, sche nolde seye
Of hire astaat, although sche scholde deye.
He bryngeth hir to Rome, and to his wyf
He gaf hir, and hir yonge sone also:
And with the senatour lad sche hir lyf.
Thus can our lady bryngen out of woo
Woful Constance, and many another moo:
And longe tyme dwelled sche in that place,
In holy werkes, as ever was hir grace.
The senatoures wif hir aunte was,
But for al that sche knew hir never more:
I wol no lenger taryen in this cas,
But to kyng Alla, which I spak of yore,
That for his wyf wepeth and siketh sore,
I wol retorne, and lete I wol Constaunce

Under the senatoures governaunce.
Kyng Alla, which that had his mooder slayn,
Upon a day fel in such repentaunce,
That if I schortly telle schal and playn,
To Rome he cometh to receyve his penaunce,
And putte him in the popes ordynaunce
In heigh and lowe, and Jhesu Crist bysought,
Forgef his wikked werkes that he wrought.
The fame anon thurgh Rome toun is born,
How Alla kyng schal come in pilgrymage,
By herberjourz that wenten him biforn,
For which the senatour, as was usage,
Rood him agein, and many of his lynage,
As wel to schewen his magnificence,
As to doon eny kyng a reverence.
Gret cheere doth this noble senatour
To kyng Alla, and he to him also;
Everich of hem doth other gret honour.
And so bifel, that in a day or two
This senatour is to kyng Alla go
To fest, and schortly, if I schal not lye,
Constances sone went in his companye.
Som men wold seyn at request of Custaunce
This senatour hath lad this child to feste:
I may not telle every circumstaunce,
Be as be may, ther was he atte leste:
But soth it is, right at his modres heste,
Byforn hem alle, duryng the metes space,
The child stood lokyng in the kynges face.

This Alla kyng hath of this child gret wonder,
And to the senatour he seyd anoon,
"Whos is that faire child that stondeth yonder?"
"I not," quod he, "by God and by seynt Jon!
A moder he hath, but fader hath he non,
That I of woot:" and schortly in a stounde
He told Alla how that this child was founde.
"But God woot," quod this senatour also,
"So vertuous a lyver in my lyf
Ne saugh I never, such as sche, nomo
Of worldly womman, mayden, or of wyf:
I dar wel say sche hadde lever a knyf
Thurghout hir brest, than ben a womman wikke,
Ther is no man can bryng hir to that prikke.
Now was this child as lik unto Custaunce
As possible is a creature to be:
This Alla hath the face in remembraunce
Of dame Custance, and theron mused he,
If that the childes mooder were ought sche
That is his wyf, and pryvely he hight,
And sped him fro the table that he might.
"Parfay!" thought he, "fantom is in myn heed;
I ought to deme, of rightful juggement,
That in the salte see my wyf is deed."
And after-ward he made this argument:
"What woot I, wher Crist hath hider sent
My wyf by see, as wel as he hir sent
To my contré, fro thennes that sche went?"
And after noon home with the senatour

Goth Alla, for to see this wonder chaunce.
This senatour doth Alla gret honour,
And hastely he sent after Custaunce.
But trusteth wel, hir luste nat to daunce,
Whan that sche wiste wherfore was that sonde,
Unnethes on hir feet sche mighte stonde.
Whan Alla saugh his wyf, fayre he hir grette,
And wepte, that it was rewthe to se;
For at the firste look he on hir sette
He knew wel verrely that it was sche:
And for sorwe, as domb sche stant as tre:
So was hire herte schett in hir distresse,
Whan sche remembred his unkyndenesse.
Twies sche swowned in his owen sight,
He wept and him excuseth pitously;
"Now God," quod he, "and alle his halwes bright
So wisly on my soule have mercy,
That of youre harm as gulteles am I
As is Maurice my sone, so lyk youre face,
Elles the feend me fecche out of this place."
Long was the sobbyng and the bitter peyne,
Or that here woful herte mighte cesse;
Gret was the pité for to here hem pleyne,
Thurgh whiche playntz gan here wo encresse.
I pray you alle my labour to relesse,
I may not telle al here woo unto morwe,
I am so wery for to speke of the sorwe.
But fynally, whan that the soth is wist,
That Alla gilteles was of hir woo,

I trowe an hundred tymes they ben kist,
And such a blys is ther bitwix hem tuo,
That, save the joye that lasteth everemo,
Ther is noon lyk, that eny creature
Hath seyn or schal, whil that the world may dure.
Tho prayde sche hir housbond meekely
In the relees of hir pytous pyne,
That he wold preye hir fader specially,
That of his majesté he wold enclyne
To vouchesauf som tyme with him to dyne.
Sche preyeth him eek, he schulde by no weye
Unto hir fader no word of hir seye.
Som men wold seye, that hir child Maurice
Doth his message unto the emperour:
But, as I gesse, Alla was nat so nyce,
To him that is so soverayn of honour,
As he that is of Cristes folk the flour,
Sent eny child; but it is best to deeme
He went himsilf, and so it may wel seme.
This emperour hath graunted gentilly
To come to dyner, as he him bysought:
And wel rede I, he loked besily
Upon the child, and on his doughter thought.
Alla goth to his in, and as him ought
Arrayed for this fest in every wyse,
As ferforth as his connyng may suffise.

5506.—*som men wold seye.* The version of the story here alluded to is that given in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, book ii, which appears to have been published before Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* were compiled.

The morwe cam, and Alla gan him dresse,
And eek his wyf, the emperour for to meete:
And forth they ryde in joye and in gladnesse,
And whan sche saugh hir fader in the streete,
Sche light adoun and falleth him to feete.
"Fader," quod sche, "your yonge child Constance
Is now ful clene out of your remembraunce.
"I am your doughter Custaunce," quod sche,
"That whilom ye have sent unto Surrye:
It am I, fader, that in the salte see
Was put alloon, and dampned for to dye.
Now, goode fader, mercy I you crye,
Send me no more unto noon hethenesse,
But thanke my lord her of his kyndenesse."
Who can the pytous joye telle al
Bitwix hem thre, sith they be thus i-mette?
But of my tale make an ende I schal;
The day goth fast, I wol no lenger lette.
This glade folk to dyner they ben sette:
In joye and blys at mete I let hem dwelle,
A thousand fold wel more than I can telle.
This child Maurice was siththen emperour
I-maad by the pope, and lyved cristenly,
To Cristes chirche dede he gret honour.
But I let al his story passen by,
Of Custaunce is my tale specially;
In olde Romayn gestes men may fynd
Maurices lyf, I bere it nought in mynde.
This kyng Alla, whan he his tyme say,

With his Constaunce, his holy wyf so swete,
To Engelond they com the righte way,
Wher as they lyve in joye and in quyete.
But litel whil it last, I you biheete,
Joy of this world for tyme wol not abyde,
Fro day to night it chaungeth as the tyde.
Who lyved ever in such delyt a day,
That him ne meved eyther his conscience,
Or ire, or talent, or som maner affray,
Envy, or pride, or passioun, or offence?
I ne say but for this ende this sentence,
That litel whil in joye or in plesaunce
Lasteth the blis of Alla with Custaunce.
For deth, that takth of heigh and low his rent,
Whan passed was a yeere, as I gesse,
Out of this worlde kyng Alla he hent,
For whom Custauns hath ful gret hevynesse.
Now let us pray that God his soule blesse!
And dame Custaunce, fynally to say,
Toward the toun of Rome goth hir way.
To Rome is come this nobil creature,
And fynt hir freendes ther bothe hool and sound;
Now is sche skaped al hir aventure.
And whanne sche hir fader had i-founde,
Doun on hir knees falleth sche to grounde,
Wepyng for tendirnes in herte blithe
Sche heried God an hundred thousand sithe.
In vertu and in holy almes-dede
They lyven alle, and never asondre wende;

Til deth departe hem, this lyf they lede:
And far now wel, my tale is at an ende.
Now Jhesu Crist, that of his might may sende
Joy after wo, governe us in his grace,
And keep ous alle that ben in this place.

THE PROLOGE OF THE WYF OF BATHE.

"EXPERIENS, though noon auctorité
Were in this world, it were ynough for me
To speke of wo that is in mariage:

Prologe of the wyf of Bathe. The Wife of Bath's prologue may be considered as a separate tale, and belongs to a class of which there are several examples among the literature of the middle ages. One of the latest is *The twa maryit wemen and the wedo* of William Dunbar. The popular literature of what is commonly looked upon as the age of chivalry, shows us that the female character was then estimated at the lowest possible rate.

The Harl. MS. erroneously places at the beginning of this prologue, the prologue to the Shipman's Tale. Some of the MSS. collated by Tyrwhitt, in which the Merchant's Tale follows the Man of Law, have the following introductory lines:—

Oure oost gan tho to loke up anon.
"Gode men," quod he, "herkeneth everichone,
As evere mote I drynke wyn or ale,
This marchant hath i-told a mery tale,
Howe Januarie hadde a lither jape,
His wyf put in his hood an ape.
But hereof I wil leve off as now.
Dame wyf of Bathe," quod he, "I pray you,
Telle us a tale now nexte after this."
"Sir oost," quod she, "so God my soule blis!
As I fully thereto wil consente:
And also it is myn hole entente
To done yow alle disporte as that I can.
But holde me excused; I am a woman,

For, lordyngs, syns I twelf yer was of age,
I thank it God that is eterne on lyve,
Housbondes atte chirch dore I have had fyve,
For I so ofte might have weddid be,
And alle were worthy men in here degré.
But me was taught, nought longe tyme goon is,
That synnes Crist went never but onys
To weddyng, in the Cane of Galile,
That by the same ensampul taught he me,
That I ne weddid schulde be but ones:
Lo, herken such a scharp word for the nones!
Biside a welle Jhesus, God and man,
Spak in reproef of the Samaritan:
'Thow hast y-had fyve housbondes,' quod he;
'And that ilk man, which that now hath the,
Is nought thin housbond;' thus he sayd certayn:
What that he ment therby, I can not sayn.
But that I axe, why the fyfte man
Was nought housbond to the Samaritan?
How many might sche have in mariage?
Yit herd I never tellen in myn age
Uppon this noumbre diffinicioun;
Men may divine and glosen up and doun.

I can not reherse, as these clerkes kunne."
And right anon she hath hir tale bygunne.

In the MS Lansdowne, there are four introductory lines:—

Than schortly answerde the wife of Bathe,
And swore a wonder grete hathe,
"Be Goddes bones, I wil tel next,
I wille nouht glose, but saye the text.
Experiment, though none auctorité, etc.

But wel I wot, withouten eny lye
God bad us for to wax and multiplie;
That gentil tixt can I wel understonde.
Ek wel I wot, he sayd, myn housebonde
Schuld lete fader and moder, and folwe me;
But of no noumber mencioun made he,
Of bygamye or of octogamye;
Why schuld men speken of that vilonye?
Lo hier the wise kyng daun Salamon,
I trow he hadde wifes mo than oon,
As wold God it were leful unto me
To be refreisshed half so oft as he!
Which gift of God had he for alle his wyvys?
No man hath such, that in the world on lyve is.
God wot, this nobil king, as to my wit,
The firste night had many a mery fit
With ech of hem, so wel was him on lyve.
I-blessid be God that I have weddid fyve!
Welcome the sixte whan that ever he schal.
For sothe I nyl not kepe me chast in al;
Whan myn housbond is fro the world i-gon,
Som cristne man schal wedde me anoon,

5626. The second Cambridge MS. and some MSS. quoted by Tyrwhitt, add after this verse:—

Of whiche I have pyked out the beste
Bothe of here nethur purs and of here cheste.
Diverse scoles maken parfyt clerkes,
And diverse practyk in many sondry werkes
Maken the werkman parfyt sekirly:
Of five husbondes scoleryng am I,
Welcome the sixthe, etc.

For than thapostil saith that I am fre
To wedde, a goddis haf, wher so it be.
He saith, that to be weddid is no synne;
Bet is to be weddid than to brynne.
What recchith me what folk sayn vilonye
Of schrewith Lameth, and of his bigamye?
I wot wel Abram was an holy man,
And Jacob eek, as ferforth as I can,
And ech of hem had wyves mo than tuo,
And many another holy man also.
Whan sawe ye in eny maner age
That highe God defendid mariage
By expres word? I pray yow tellith me;
Or wher commaunded he virginité?
I wot as wel as ye, it is no drede,
Thapostil, whan he spekth of maydenhede,
He sayd, that precept therof had he noon:
Men may counseil a womman to be oon,
But counselyng nys no comaundement;
He put it in our owne juggement.
For hadde God comaundid maydenhede,
Than had he dampnyd weddyng with the dede;
And certes, if ther were no seed i-sowe,
Virginité wheron schuld it growe?
Poul ne dorst not comaunde atte lest
A thing, of which his maister gaf non hest.
The dart is set upon virginité,
Cach who so may, who rennith best let se.
But this word is not taken of every wight,

But ther as God list give it of his might.
I wot wel that thapostil was a mayde,
But natheles, though that he wrot or sayde,
He wolde that every wight were such as he,
Al nys but counseil unto virginité.
And for to ben a wyf he gaf me leve,
Of indulgence, so nys it to repreve
To wedde me, if that my make deye,
Withoute excepcioun of bigamye;
Al were it good no womman for to touche,
(He mente in his bed or in his couche)
For peril is bothe fuyr and tow to assemble;
Ye knowe what this ensample wold resemble.
This is al and som, he holdith virginité
More parfit than weddyng in frelté:
(Frelté clepe I, but if that he and sche
Wold leden al ther lif in chastité).
I graunt it wel, I have noon envye,
Though maidenhede preferre bygamye;
It liketh hem to be clene in body and gost:
Of myn estate I nyl make no bost.
For wel ye wot, a lord in his houshold
He nath not every vessel ful of gold;
Som ben of tre, and don her lord servise.
God clepeth folk to him in sondry wise,
And every hath of God a propre gifte,
Som this, som that, as him likith to schifte.

5681.—*a lord in his houshold,* See 2 Tim. ii, 20.

Virginité is gret perfeccioun,
And continens eek with gret devocioun:
But Christ, that of perfeccioun is welle,
Bad nought every wight schuld go and selle
Al that he had, and give it to the pore,
And in such wise folwe him and his fore.
He spak to hem that wolde lyve parfytly,
And, lordyngs, by your leve, that am not I;
I wol bystowe the flour of myn age
In the actes and in the fruytes of mariage.
Tel me also, to what conclusioun
Were membres maad of generacioun,
And of so parfit wise a wight y-wrought?
Trustith right wel, thay were nought maad for nought.
Glose who so wol, and say bothe up and doun,
That thay were made for purgacioun,
Oure bothe uryn, and thinges smale,
Were eek to knowe a femel fro a male:
And for non other cause? say ye no?
Thexperiens wot wel it is not so.
So that these clerke ben not with me wrothe,
I say this, that thay makid ben for bothe,
This is to say, for office and for ease
Of engendrure, ther we God nought displease.
Why schuld men elles in her bokes sette,
That man schal yelde to his wif his dette?

5699.—*And of so parfit wise.* The MS. Harl. reads, *And in what wise.* Some MSS. read *and why*, instead of *a wight.*

Now wherwith schuld he make his payement,
If he ne used his sely instrument?
Than were thay maad up a creature
To purge uryn, and eek for engendrure.
But I say not that every wight is holde,
That hath such harneys as I to yow tolde,
To gon and usen hem in engendrure;
Than schuld men take of chastité no cure.
Crist was a mayde, and schapen as a man,
And many a seynt, sin that the world bygan,
Yet lyved thay ever in parfyt chastité.
I nyl envye no virginité.
Let hem be bred of pured whete seed,
And let us wyves eten barly breed.
And yet with barly bred, men telle can,
Oure Lord Jhesu refreisschid many a man.
In such astaat as God hath cleped ous
I wil persever, I am not precious;
In wyfhode I wil use myn instrument
Als frely as my maker hath me it sent.
If I be daungerous, God give me sorwe,
Myn housbond schal han it at eve and morwe,
Whan that him list com forth and pay his dette.
An housbond wol I have, I wol not lette,
Which schal be bothe my dettour and my thral,
And have his tribulacioun withal
Upon his fleissch, whil that I am his wyf.
I have the power duryng al my lif
Upon his propre body, and not he;

Right thus thapostil told it unto me,
And bad oure housbondes for to love us wel;
Al this sentence me likith every del."
Up start the pardoner, and that anoon;
"Now, dame," quod he, "by God and by seint Jon,
Ye ben a noble prechour in this caas.
I was aboute to wedde a wif, allaas!
What? schal I buy it on my fleisch so deere?
Yit had I lever wedde no wyf to yere!"
"Abyd," quod sche, "my tale is not bygonne.
Nay, thou schalt drinke of another tonne
Er that I go, schal savere wors than ale.
And whan that I have told the forth my tale
Of tribulacioun in mariage,
Of which I am expert in al myn age,
This is to say, myself hath ben the whippe;
Than might thou chese whethir thou wilt sippe
Of thilke tonne, that I schal abroche.
Be war of it, er thou to neigh approche.
For I schal telle ensamples mo than ten:
Who so that nyl be war by other men
By him schal other men corrected be:
The same wordes writes Ptholomé,
Rede in his Almagest, and tak it there."
"Dame, I wold pray you, if that youre wille were,"

5764.—*Ptholomé.* The wife of Bath's quotations from Ptolemy, here and at l. 5906, are not, it appears, to be found in the Almagest. She seems to quote Ptolemy when she cannot father an opinion upon anybody else.

Sayde this pardoner, "as ye bigan,
Tel forth youre tale, and sparith for no man,
Teche us yonge men of youre practike."
"Gladly," quod sche, "syns it may yow like.
But that I pray to al this companye,
If that I speke after my fantasie,
As taketh nought agreef of that I say,
For myn entente is nought but to play.
"Now, sires, now wol I telle forth my tale.
As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,
I schal say soth of housbondes that I hadde,
As thre of hem were goode, and tuo were badde.
Tuo of hem were goode, riche, and olde;
Unnethes mighte thay the statute holde,
In which that thay were bounden unto me:
Ye wot wel what I mene of this pardé!
As help me God, I laugh whan that I thinke,
How pitously on night I made hem swynke,
But, by my fay! I told of it no stoor:
Thay had me give her lond and her tresor,
Me nedith not no lenger doon diligence
To wynne her love or doon hem reverence.
Thay loved me so wel, by God above!
That I tolde no deynté of her love.
A wys womman wol bysi hir ever in oon
To gete hir love, there sche hath noon.

5779 —*Tuo of hem.* The more common reading of the MSS. is *The thre were*, which is adopted by Tyrwhitt.

But synnes I had hem holly in myn hond,
And synnes thay had me geven al her lond,
What schuld I take keep hem for to please,
But it were for my profyt, or myn ease?
I sette hem so on werke, by my fay!
That many a night thay songen weylaway.
The bacoun was nought fet for hem, I trowe,
That som men fecche in Essex at Donmowe.
I governed hem so wel after my lawe,
That ech of hem ful blisful was and fawe
To bringe me gaye thinges fro the faire.
Thay were ful glad whan I spak to hem faire;
For, God it woot, I chidde hem spitously.
Now herkeneth how I bar me proprely.
Ye wise wyves, that can understonde,
Thus scholde ye speke, and bere hem wrong on honde;
For half so boldely can ther no man
Swere and lye as a womman can.

5799.—*the bacoun*. The Dunmow bacon appears to have been in great reputation in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The following notice of this curious custom is found among some poetry of the latter period, printed in the *Reliquiæ Antiq.*, ii, p. 29:—

I can fynd no man now that wille enquere
The parfyte wais unto Dunmow!
For they repent hem within a yere,
And many within a weke, and sonner, men trow;
That cawsith the wais to be rowgh and overgrow,
That no man may fynd path or gap,
The world is turnyd to another shap.

5810.—*swere and lye*. A parallel passage is quoted by Tyrwhitt, from the *Roman de la Rose*:—

Car plus hardiment que nulz homs
Certainement jurent et mentent.

(I say not by wyves that ben wise,
But if it be whan thay ben mysavise.)
I-wis a wif, if that sche can hir good,
Schal beren him on hond the cow is wood,
And take witnes on hir oughne mayde
Of hire assent: but herkenith how I sayde.
See, olde caynard, is this thin array?
Why is my neghebores wif so gay?
Sche is honoured over al ther sche goth;
I sitte at hom, I have no thrifty cloth.
What dostow at my neighebores hous?
Is sche so fair? what, artow amorous?
What roune ye with hir maydenes? *benedicite*,
Sir olde lecchour, let thi japes be.
And if I have a gossib, or a frend
Withouten gilt, thou chidest as a fend,
If that I walk or play unto his hous.
Thou comest hom as dronken as a mous,
And prechist on thy bench, with evel preef,

5817. "In the following speech, it would be endless to produce all Chaucer's imitations. The beginning is from the fragment of Theophrastus, quoted by St. Jerome, *c. Jovin*, l. i, and by John of Salisbury, *Polycrat.* lib. viii, c. xi. see also *Rom. de la R.* ver. 8967, et suiv." *Tyrwhitt.*

5828.—*dronken as a mous.* This was a common phrase. In the satirical poem of Doctour Double-ale, we have the lines.

Then seke another house,
This is not worth a louse;
As *dronken as a mouse*.

Among the letters relating to the suppression of monasteries (Camd. Soc. Publ.) p. 133, there is one from a monk of Pershore, who says that his brother monks of that house "drynk an bowll after collacyon tell ten or xii. of the clock, and cum to mattens *as dronck as mys*."

Thou saist to me, it is a gret meschief
To wedde a pover womman, for costage:
And if that sche be riche and of parage,
Thanne saist thou, that it is a tormentrie
To suffre hir pride and hir malencolie.
And if that sche be fair, thou verray knave,
Thou saist that every holour wol hir have.
Sche may no while in chastité abyde,
That is assayled thus on eche syde.
Thou saist that som folk desire us for riches,
Som for our schap, and som for our fairnes,
And some, for that sche can synge and daunce,
And some for gentilesse or daliaunce,
Som for hir handes and hir armes smale:
Thus goth al to the devel by thi tale.
Thou saist, men may nought kepe a castel wal,
It may so be biseged over al.
And if sche be foul, thanne thou saist, that sche
Coveitith every man that sche may se;
For, as a spaynel, sche wol on him lepe,
Til that sche fynde som man hire to chepe.
Ne noon so gray a goos goth in the lake,
As sayest thou, wol be withouten make.
And saist, it is an hard thing for to wolde
Thing, that no man wol, his willes holde.
Thus seistow, lorel, whan thou gost to bedde,
And that no wys man nedith for to wedde,
Ne no man that entendith unto hevene.
With wilde thunder dynt and fuyry levene

Mote thi wicked necke be to-broke!
Thou saist, that droppyng hous, and eek smoke,
And chydyng wyves maken men to fle
Out of here oughne hous; a, *benedicite*,
What eylith such an old man for to chyde?
Thou seist, we wyves woln oure vices hide,
Til we ben weddid, and than we wil hem schewe.
Wel may that be a proverbe of a schrewe.
Thou saist, that assen, oxen, and houndes,
Thay ben assayed at divers stoundes,
Basyns, lavours eek, er men hem bye,
Spones, stooles, and al such housbondrie,
Also pottes, clothes, and array,
But folk of wyves maken non assay,
Til thay ben weddid, olde dotard schrewe!
And thanne, saistow, we woln oure vices schewe.
Thou saist also, that it displesith me,
But if that thou wilt praysen my beauté,
And but thou pore alway in my face,
And clepe me faire dame in every place;
And but thou make a fest on thilke day
That I was born, and make me freisch and gay;
And but thou do my norice honoure,
And to my chamberer withinne my boure,
And to my fadres folk, and myn allies:
Thus saistow, olde barel ful of lies!
And yit of oure apprentys Jankyn,
For his crisp her, schynyng as gold so fyn,
And for he squiereth me up and doun,

Yet hastow caught a fals suspeccioun:
I nyl him nought, though thou were deed to morwe.
But tel me wherfor hydestow with sorwe
The keyes of thy chist away fro me?
It is my good as wel as thin, pardé.
"What! wenest thou make an ydiot of oure dame?
Now by that lord that cleped is seint Jame,
Thow schalt not bothe, though thou were wood,
Be maister of my body and of my good;
That oon thou schalt forgo maugré thin yen!
What helpeth it on me tenqueren or espien?
I trowe thou woldest lokke me in thy chest.
Thou scholdist say, 'wif, go wher the lest;
Take youre disport; I nyl lieve no talis;
I know yow for a trewe wif, dame Alis.'
We loveth no man, that takith keep or charge
Wher that we goon; we love to be at large.
"Of alle men i-blessed most he be
The wise astrologe daun Ptholomé,
That saith this proverbe in his Almagest:
Of alle men his wisedom is highest,
That rekkith not who hath the world in honde.
By this proverbe thou schalt understonde,
Have thou ynough, what thar the recch or care
How merily that other folkes fare?
For certes, olde dotard, with your leve,
Ye schul have queynte right ynough at eve.
He is to gret a nygard that wol werne
A man to light a candel at his lanterne;

He schal have never the lasse light, pardé.
Have thou ynough, the thar not pleyne the.
" Thou saist also, that if we make us gay
With clothing and with precious array,
That it is peril of our chastité.
And yit, with sorwe, thou most enforce the,
And say these wordes in thapostles name:
In abyt maad with chastité and schame
Ye wommen schuld apparayl yow, quod he,
And nought with tressed her, and gay perré,
As perles, ne with golden clothis riche.
After thy text, ne after thin rubriche,
I wol nought wirche as moche as a gnat.
Thow saist thus that I was lik a cat;
For who so wolde senge the cattes skyn,
Than wold the catte duellen in his in;
And if the cattes skyn be slyk and gay,
Sche wol not duelle in house half a day,
But forth sche wil, er eny day be dawet,
To schewe hir skyn, and goon a caterwrawet.
This is to say, if I be gay, sir schrewe,
I wol renne aboute, my borel for to schewe.
Sir olde fool, what helpith the to aspien?
Though thou praydest Argus with his hundrid yen
To be my wardecorps, as he can best,
In faith he schuld not kepe me but if me lest:
Yit couthe I make his berd, though queynte he be.

5923.—*thapostles name.* See 1 Tim. ii. 9.

Thou saydest eek, that ther ben thinges thre,
The whiche thinges troublen al this erthe,
And that no wight may endure the ferthe.
O leve sire schrewe, Jhesu schorte thy lif!
Yit prechestow, and saist, an hateful wif
I-rekened is for oon of these meschaunces.
Ben ther noon other of thy resemblaunces
That ye may liken youre parables unto,
But if a cely wyf be oon of tho?
Thow likenest wommannes love to helle,
To bareyn lond, ther water may not duelle.
Thou likenest it also to wilde fuyr;
The more it brenneth, the more it hath desir
To consume every thing, that brent wol be.
Thou saist, right as wormes schenden a tre,
Right so a wif schendith hir housebonde;
This knowen tho that ben to wyves bonde.
Lordynges, right thus, as ye han understonde,
Bar I styf myn housebondes on honde,
That thus thay sayde in her dronkenesse;
And al was fals, but that I took witnesse
On Jankyn, and upon my nece also.
O Lord, the peyne I dede hem, and the wo,
Ful gulteles, by Goddes swete pyne;
For as an hors, I couthe bothe bite and whyne;
I couthe pleyne, and yet I was in the gilt,
Or elles I hadde often tyme be spilt.
Who so first cometh to the mylle, first grynt;

5971.—*to the mylle.* This proverb is found also in French, in the fifteenth century, Qui premier vient au moulin premier doit mouldre.

I pleyned first, so was oure werre stynt.
Thay were ful glad to excuse hem ful blyve
Of thing, that thay never agilt in her lyve.
And wenches wold I beren hem on honde,
Whan that for seek thay might unnethes stonde,
Yit tykeled I his herte for that he
Wende I had of him so gret chiereté:
I swor that al my walkyng out a nyght
Was for to aspie wenches that he dight:
Under that colour had I many a mirthe.
For al such witte is geven us of birthe;
Deceipt, wepyng, spynnyng, God hath give
To wymmen kyndely, whil thay may lyve.
And thus of o thing I avaunte me,
At thende I had the bet in ech degré,
By sleight or fors, or of som maner thing,
As by continuel murmur or chidyng,
Namly on bedde, hadden thay meschaunce,
Ther wold I chide, and do hem no plesaunce:
I wold no lenger in the bed abyde,
If that I felt his arm over my syde,
Til he had maad his raunsoun unto me,
Than wold I suffre him doon his nyceté.
And therfor every man this tale telle,
Wynne who so may, for al is for to selle:

5983.—*deceipt*. This appears to have been a popular saying: in the margin of the Lansdowne MS. it is given in a Latin leonine, thus:—

Fallere, flere, nere, dedit Deus in muliere.

5988.—*chidyng*. Most of the MSS. have, with Tyrwhitt, *grucchyng*.

With empty hond men may noon haukes lure,
For wynnyng wold I al his lust endure,
And make me a feyned appetyt,
And yit in bacoun had I never delyt:
That made me that ever I wold hem chyde.
For though the pope had seten hem bisyde,
I nold not spare hem at her oughne bord,
For, by my trouthe, I quyt hem word for word.
Als help me verray God omnipotent,
Though I right now schuld make my testament,
I owe hem nought a word, that it nys quitte,
I brought it so aboute by my witte,
That thay most geve it up, as for the best,
Or ellis had we never ben in rest.
For though he loked as a grym lyoun,
Yit schuld he fayle of his conclusioun.
Than wold I say, 'now, goode leef, tak keep,
How mekly lokith Wilkyn our scheep!
Com ner, my spouse, let me ba thy cheke.
Ye schulde be al pacient and meke,
And have a swete spiced consciens,
Siththen ye preche so of Jobes paciens.
Suffreth alway, syns ye so wel can preche,
And but ye do, certeyn we schul yow teche
That it is fair to have a wyf in pees.
On of us tuo mot bowe douteles:
And, siththen man is more resonable
Than womman is, ye moste be suffrable.
What aylith yow thus for to grucche and grone?

Is it for ye wold have my queynt allone?
Why, tak it al: lo, have it every del.
Peter! I schrewe yow but ye love it wel.
For if I wolde selle my *bele chose*,
I couthe walk as freisch as eny rose,
But I wol kepe it for youre owne toth.
Ye ben to blame, by God, I say yow soth!"
Such maner wordes hadde we on honde.
Now wol I speke of my fourth housbonde.
My fourthe housbond was a revelour,
This is to say, he had a paramour,
And I was yong and ful of ragerie,
Stiborn and strong, and joly as a pye.
How couthe I daunce to an harpe smale,
And synge y-wys as eny nightyngale,
Whan I had dronke a draught of swete wyn.
Metillius, the foule cherl, the swyn,
That with a staf byraft his wyf hir lyf
For sche drank wyn, though I had ben his wif,
Ne schuld nought have daunted me fro drink:
And after wyn on Venus most I think.
For al so siker as cold engendrith hayl,
A likorous mouth most have a licorous tail.
In wymmen vinolent is no defens,

6028.—*Peter!* This is a very common exclamation, from St. Peter, as Marie! from the Virgin. St. Peter, as the reputed head of the papacy, stood high among the saints in the Romish Church.

6042.—*Metillius.* This anecdote is taken from Valerius Maximus, lib. vi. c. 3, ex. 9. The same story is told by Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xiv. 13, but for Egnatius Metellus he substitutes the name of Mecenius.

This knowen lecchours by experiens.
But, lord Crist, whan that it remembrith me
Upon my youthe, and on my jolité,
It tikelith me about myn herte-roote.
Unto this day it doth myn herte boote,
That I have had my world as in my tyme.
But age, allas! that al wol envenyme,
Hath me bireft my beauté and my pith:
Let go, farwel, the devyl go therwith.
The flour is goon, ther nis no more to telle,
The bran, as I best can, now mot I selle.
But yit to be mery wol I fonde.
Now wol I telle of my fourt housbonde.
I say, I had in herte gret despyt,
That he of eny other had delit;
But he was quit, by God and by seint Joce:
I made him of the same woode a croce,
Nought of my body in no foul manere,
But certeynly I made folk such chere,
That in his owne grees I made him frie
For anger, and for verray jalousie.
By God, in erthe I was his purgatory,
For which I hope his soule be in glory.
For, God it wot, he sat ful stille and song,
Whan that his scho ful bitterly him wrong.
Ther was no wight, sauf God and he, that wist

6065.—*seint Joce.* A French saint, known in Latin as St. Judocus.
6074.—*his scho.* An allusion to the story of the Roman sage, who, when blamed for divorcing his wife, said that a shoe might appear outwardly to fit well, but no one but the wearer knew where it pinched.

In many wyse how sore I him twist.
He dyed whan I cam fro Jerusalem,
And lith i-grave under the roode-bem:
Al is his tombe nought so curious
As was the sepulcre of him Darius,
Which that Appellus wrought so subtily.
It nys but wast to burie him preciously.
Let him farwel, God give his soule rest,
He is now in his grave and in his chest.
"Now of my fifte housbond wol I telle:
God let his soule never come in helle!
And yet was he to me the moste schrewe,
That fele I on my ribbes alle on rewe,
And ever schal, unto myn endyng day.
But in oure bed he was so freisch and gay,
And therwithal so wel he couthe me glose,
Whan that he wold have my *bele chose*,
That, though he had me bete on every boon,
He couthe wynne my love right anoon.
I trowe, I loved him beste, for that he
Was of his love daungerous to me.
We wymmen han, if that I schal nought lye,
In this matier a queynte fantasie.
Wayte, what thyng we may not lightly have,
Therafter wol we sonnest crie and crave.
Forbeed us thing, and that desire we;
Pres on us fast, and thanne wol we fle.
With daunger outen alle we oure ware;
Greet pres at market makith deer chaffare,

And to greet chep is holden at litel pris;
This knowith every womman that is wys.
My fyfth housbond, God his soule blesse,
Which that I took for love and no richesse,
He som tyme was a clerk of Oxenford,
And had left scole, and went at hoom to borde
With my gossib, duellyng in oure toun:
God have hir soule, hir name was Alisoun.
Sche knew myn herte and my priveté,
Bet than oure parisch prest, so mot I the.
To hir bywreyed I my counseil al;
For had myn housbond pissed on a wal,
Or don a thing that schuld have cost his lif,
To hir, and to another worthy wyf,
And to my neece, which I loved wel,
I wold have told his counseil every del.
And so I did ful ofte, God it woot,
That made his face ofte reed and hoot
For verry schame, and blamyd himself, that he
Had told to me so gret a priveté.
And so byfel that oones in a Lent,
(So ofte tyme to my gossib I went,
For ever yit I loved to be gay,
And for to walk in March, Averil, and May
From hous to hous, to here sondry talis)
That Jankyn clerk, and my gossib dame Alis,
And I myself, into the feldes went.
Myn housbond was at Londone al that Lent;
I had the bettir leysir for to pleye,

And for to see, and eek for to be seye
Of lusty folk; what wist I wher my grace
Was schapen for to be, or in what place?
Therfore I made my visitaciouns
To vigiles, and to processiouns,
To prechings eek, and to this pilgrimages,
To pleyes of miracles, and mariages,
And wered upon my gay scarlet gytes.
These wormes, these moughtes, ne these mytes,
Upon my perel fretith hem never a deel,
And wostow why? for thay were used wel.
Now wol I telle forth what happid me:
I say, that in the feldes walkid we,
Til trewely we had such daliaunce
This clerk and I, that of my purvyaunce
I spak to him, and sayde how that he,
If I were wydow, schulde wedde me.
For certeynly, I say for no bobaunce,
Yit was I never withouten purveyaunce

6137.—*visitaciouns.* This passage appears to be an imitation of one cited by Tyrwhitt from the *Roman de la Rose*,

Souvent voise à la mere eglise,
Et face visitations
Aux nopces, aux processions,
Aux jeux, aux festes, aux caroles.

6140.—*pleyes of miracles.* The miracle-plays were favourite occasions for people to assemble together in great numbers. In a tale among my *Latin Stories*, p. 100, we are told that some pilgrims saw, in a very large meadow, "maximam multitudinem hominum congregatam, quos nunc silentes, nunc acclamantes, nunc cachinnantes audiebant. Admirantes igitur quare in loco tali tanta esset hominum adunatio, æstimabant ibi spectacula celebrare quæ nos miracula appellare consuevimus." This is a good description of the assemblage at a miracle play.

Of mariage, ne of no thinges eeke:
I hold a mouses hert not worth a leek,
That hath but oon hole to sterte to,
And if that faile, than is al i-do.
[I bare him on hond he had enchanted me;
(My dame taughte me that subtiltee)
And eke I sayd, I met of him all night,
He wold han slain me, as I lay upright,
And all my bed was ful of veray blood;
But yet I hope that ye shuln do me good:
For blood betokeneth gold, as me was taught,
And al was false, I dremed of him right naught,
But as I folwed ay my dames lore,
As wel of that as of other thinges more.]
But now, sir, let me se, what I schal sayn:
A ha! by God, I have my tale agayn.
"Whan that my fourthe housbond was on bere,
I wept algate and made a sory cheere,
As wyves mooten, for it is usage;
And with my kerchief covered my visage;

6154.—*a mouses hert.* This was a very common proverb. It is found in French: the following example is taken from a MS. of the thirteenth century:—

Dolente la souris,
Qui ne set qu'un seul pertuis.

It also occurs in German,—

Dass ist wol eine arme Maus,
Die nur weiss zu einem Loch' hinaus.

The same proverb is said of a fox in German. There was an ancient Latin proverb to the same effect.

6157.—This, and the nine following lines, are omitted in the Harl. MS. and others. The second Cambridge MS. has them. They are here printed from Tyrwhitt.

But, for that I was purveyed of a make,
I wept but smal, and that I undertake.
To chirche was myn housbond brought on morwe
With neighebors that for him made sorwe,
And Jankyn oure clerk was oon of tho:
As help me God, whan that I saugh him go
After the beere, me thought he had a paire
Of legges and of feet, so clene and faire,
That al myn hert I gaf unto his hold.
He was, I trowe, twenty wynter old,
And I was fourty, if I schal say the sothe,
But yit I had alway a coltis tothe.
Gattothid I was, and that bycom me wel,
I had the prynte of seynt Venus sel.
[As helpe me God, I was a lusty oon,
And faire, and riche, and yonge, and wel begon:
And trewely, as myn housbonds tolde me,
I had the best queynt that might be.
For certes I am all venerian
In felyng, and my herte is marcian:
Venus me gave my lust and likerousnesse,
And Mars gave me my sturdy hardinesse.]
Myn ascent was Taur, and Mars therinne:
Allas, alas, that ever love was synne!
I folwed ay myn inclinacioun

6187.—The Harl. MS. omits ll. 6187—6194, and 6201—6208. The second Cambridge MS. is the only one I have collated which contains them all. The Lansd. and first Cambridge MSS. have only ll. 6187—6190. I have taken them from Tyrwhitt, collated with the MSS.

By vertu of my constillacioun:
That made me that I couthe nought withdrawe
My chambre of Venus from a good felawe.
[Yet have I Martes marke uppon my face,
And also in another privé place.
For God so wisly be my salvacioun,
I loved never by no discretioun,
But ever folwed myn owne appetit,
All were he shorte, longe, blake, or whit;
I toke no kepe, so that he liked me,
How povre he was, ne eek of what degré.]
What schuld I say? but at the monthis ende
This joly clerk Jankyn, that was so heende,
Hath weddid me with gret solempnitee,
And to him gaf I al the lond and fee
That ever was me give therbifore:
But aftirward repented me ful sore.
He nolde suffre nothing of my list.
By God, he smot me oones with his fist,
For I rent oones out of his book a lef,
That of that strok myn eere wax al deef.
Styborn I was, as is a leones,
And of my tonge a verray jangleres,
And walk I wold, as I had don biforn,
Fro hous to hous, although he had it sworn:
For which he ofte tymes wolde preche,
And me of olde Romayn gestes teche.
How he Simplicius Gallus left his wyf,

6225.—*Simplicius Gallus.* This story is taken from Val. Max. vi, 3.

And hir forsok for terme of al his lyf,
Nought but for open heedid he hir say
Lokyng out at his dore upon a day.
Another Romayn told he me by name,
That, for his wyf was at a somer game
Without his wityng, he forsok hir eeke.
And thanne wold he upon his book seeke
That ilke proverbe of Ecclesiaste,
Wher he comaundith, and forbedith faste,
Man schal not suffre his wyf go roule aboute.
Than wold he say right thus withouten doute:

> Who that buyldeth his hous al of salwes,
> And priketh his blynde hors over the falwes,
> And suffrith his wyf to go seken halwes,
> Is worthy to be honged on the galwes.

But al for nought, I sette nought an hawe
Of his proverbe, ne of his olde sawe;
Ne I wold not of him corretted be.
I hate him that my vices tellith me,
And so doon mo, God it wot, than I.
This made him with me wood al outerly;
I nolde not forbere him in no cas.
Now wol I say yow soth, by seint Thomas,
Why that I rent out of the book a leef,
For which he smot me, that I was al deef.
He had a book, that gladly night and day

6229.—*Another Romayn*. Sempronius Sophus, of whom this story is told by Val. Max. loc. cit. Valerius Maximus was a favourite among the scholars of the Middle Ages.

For his desport he wolde rede alway,
He clepyd it Valerye, and Theofrast,
At which book he lough alway ful fast.
And eek ther was som tyme a clerk at Rome,
A cardynal, that heet seint Jerome,
That made a book agens Jovynyan.
In which book eek ther was Tertulyan,
Crisippus, Tortula, and eek Helewys,
That was abbas not fer fro Paris;
And eek the parablis of Salamon,
Ovydes Art, and bourdes many oon;
And alle these were bounde in oo volume.
And every night and day was his custume,
Whan he had leysir and vacacioun
From other worldes occupacioun,
To reden in this book of wikked wyves.
He knew of hem mo legendes and lyves,
Than ben of goode wyves in the Bible.
For trustith wel, it is an inpossible,
That any clerk schal speke good of wyves,
But if it be of holy seintes lyves,

6253.—The tract of Walter Mapes against marriage, published under the title of *Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum*, is common in manuscripts. Jerome, in his book *contra Jovinianum*, a bitter diatribe against matrimony, quotes a long extract from *liber aureolus Theophrasti de nuptiis*. "As to the rest of the contents of the 'clerkes' volume, Hieronymus *contra Jovinianum*, and Tertullian *de Pallio*, are sufficiently known; and so are the Letters of Eloisa and Abelard, the Parables of Solomon, and Ovid's *Art of Love*. I know of no *Trotula*, but one, whose book *Curandarum ægritudinum muliebrium ante, in, et post partum*, is printed *int. Medicos antiquos*, Ven. 1547. Who is meant by Crisippus I cannot guess."—*Tyrwhitt*.

Ne of noon other wyfes never the mo.
Who peyntid the leoun, tel me, who?
By God, if wommen hadde writen stories,
As clerkes have withinne her oratories,
Thay wold have write of men more wickidnes,
Than al the mark of Adam may redres.
These children of Mercury and of Venus
Ben in her werkyng ful contrarious.
Mercury lovith wisdom and science,
And Venus loveth ryot and dispense.
And for her divers disposicioun,
Ech fallith in otheres exaltacioun.
And thus, God wot, Mercury is desolate
In Pisses, wher Venus is exaltate,
And Venus faylith wher Mercury is reysed.
Therfor no womman of clerkes is preised.

6279.—*of Mercury and of Venus.* An old astrological treatise of the sixteenth century informs us that "Venus..signifiethe white men or browne...joyfull, laughter, liberall, pleasers, dauncers, entertayners of women, players, perfumers, musitions, messengers of love." Mercury, according to the same authority, "signifieth...subtill men, ingenious, unconstant, rymers, poets, advocates, orators, phylosophers, soothsayers, arithmeticians, and busie fellowes."

6284.—*exaltacioun.* Tyrwhitt gives the following explanation of this term. "In the old astrology, a planet was said to be in its *exaltation*, when it was in that sign of the Zodiac in which it was supposed to exert its strongest influence. The opposite sign was called its *dejection*, as in that it was supposed to be weakest. To take the instance in the text, the exaltation of Venus was in *Pisces* (see also ver. 10587), and her dejection of course in *Virgo*. But in *Virgo* was the exaltation of Mercury.

She is the welthe and the rysynge,
The lust, the joy, and the lykynge,
Unto Mercury.—

Gower, *Conf. Am.* l. vii. fol. 147. So in ver. 10098, Cancer is called *Joves exaltacioun*."

The clerk whan he is old, and may nought do
Of Venus werkis, is not worth a scho;
Than sit he doun, and writ in his dotage,
That wommen can nought kepe here mariage.
But now to purpos, why I tolde the,
That I was beten for a leef, pardé.
Upon a night Jankyn, that was oure sire,
Rad on his book, as he sat by the fyre,
Of Eva first, that for hir wikkidnes
Was al mânkynde brought to wrecchednes,
[For which that Jhesu Crist himself was slayn,
That bought us with his herte-blood agayn.
Lo here expresse of wommen may ye fynde,
That woman was the losse of al mankynde.]
Tho rad he me how Sampson left his heris
Slepyng, his lemman kut hem with hir scheris,
Thurgh which tresoun lost he bothe his yen.
Tho rad he me, if that I schal not lyen,
Of Ercules, and of his Dejanyre,
That caused him to sette himself on fuyre.
No thing forgat he the care and wo
That Socrates had with his wyves tuo;
How Exantipa cast pisse upon his heed.

6299.—This and the three following lines are omitted in most of the MSS. I have consulted.

6303.—*Tho rad he.* The following examples are mostly taken from the *Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum*, and from the *Roman de la Rose.*

6311.—*Exantipa.* Xantippe. In the other proper names in the following lines I have retained the corrupt orthography of the age, as given in the MS. *Phasipha* is, of course, Pasiphae; *Clydamystra*, Clitemnestra; *Amphiores*, Amphiorax; *Exiphilem*, Eriphile, etc.

This seely man sat stille, as he were deed,
He wyped his heed, no more durst he sayn,
But, 'Er thunder stynte ther cometh rayn.'
Of Phasipha, that was the queen of Creete,
For schrewednes him thought the tale sweete.
Fy! spek no more, it is a grisly thing,
Of her horribil lust and her likyng.
Of Clydemystra for hir leccherie
That falsly made hir housbond for to dye,
He rad it with ful good devocioun.
He told me eek, for what occasioun
Amphiores at Thebes left his lif:
Myn housbond had a legend of his wyf
Exiphilem, that for an ouche of gold
Hath prively unto the Grekes told
Wher that hir housbond hyd him in a place,
For which he had at Thebes sory grace.
Of Lyma told he me, and of Lucye:
Thay bothe made her housbondes for to dye,
That oon for love, that other was for hate.
Lyma hir housbond on an even late
Empoysond hath, for that sche was his fo:
Lucia licorous loved hir housbond so,
For that he schuld alway upon hir think,
Sche gaf him such a maner love-drink,

6329.—*Lyma*. In the Latin story (in the *Epist. Valer. ad Rufin.*) the name is *Luna*, which appears first to have been mistaken for *Lima*, and then written *Lyma*. So the scribes in l. 6708, have read *Damit* for *Daunt*, and afterwards written it *Damyt*, which is found in one of the Cambridge MSS.

That he was deed er it was by the morwe:
And thus algates housbondes had sorwe.
Than told he me, how oon Latumyus
Compleigned unto his felaw Arrius,
That in his gardyn growed such a tre,
On which he sayde how that his wyves thre
Honged hemselfe for herte despitous.
'O leve brother,' quod this Arrious,
'Gif me a plont of thilke blessid tre,
And in my gardyn schal it plantid be.'
Of latter date of wyves hath he red
That some han slayn her housbondes in her bed,
And let her lecchour dighten al the night,
Whil that the corps lay in the flor upright:
And some han dryven nayles in her brayn,
Whiles thay sleepe, and thus thay han hem slayn:
Som have hem give poysoun in her drink:
He spak more harm than herte may bythynk.
And therwithal he knew mo proverbes,
Than in this world ther growen gres or herbes,
Better is, quod he, thyn habitacioun
Be with a leoun, or a foul dragoun,
Than with a womman usyng for to chyde.
Better is, quod he, hihe in the roof abyde,
Than with an angry womman doun in a hous:

6355.—*mo proverbes.* See Prov. xxi, 9, 19, and xi, 22. Tyrwhitt observes that the observation in l. 6364 is found in Herodotus, lib. i, p. 5. It is however found in various medieval writers, from whom Chaucer might have taken it.

Thay ben so wicked and so contrarious,
Thay haten that her housbondes loven ay.
He sayd, a womman cast hir schame away,
Whan sche cast of hir smok; and forthermo,
A fair womman, but sche be chast also,
Is lik a gold ryng in a sowes nose.
Who wolde wene, or who wolde suppose
The wo that in myn herte was and pyne?
And whan I saugh he nolde never fyne
To reden on this cursed book al night,
Al sodeinly thre leves have I plight
Out of this booke that he had, and eeke
I with my fist so took him on the cheeke,
That in oure fuyr he fel bak-ward adoun.
And he upstert, as doth a wood leoun,
And with his fist he smot me on the hed,
That in the floor I lay as I were deed.
And whan he saugh so stille that I lay,
He was agast, and wold have fled away.
Til atte last out of my swown I brayde.
'O, hastow slayn me, false thef?' I sayde,
'And for my loud thus hastow mourdrid me?
Er I be deed, yit wol I kisse the.'
And ner he cam, and knelith faire adoun,
And sayde, 'Deere suster Alisoun,
As help me God, I schal the never smyte:
That I have doon it is thiself to wite,
Forgive it me, and that I the biseke.'
And yet eftsones I hyt him on the cheke,

And sayde, 'Thef, thus mekil I me wreke.
Now wol I dye, I may no lenger speke.'
But atte last, with mochil care and wo,
We fyl accordid by oureselven tuo:
He gaf me al the bridil in myn hand
To have the governaunce of hous and land,
And of his tonge, and of his hond also,
And made him brenne his book anoon right tho.
And whan I hadde geten unto me
By maistry al the sovereyneté; 6400
And that he sayde, 'Myn owne trewe wif,
Do as the list, the term of al thy lif,
Kepe thyn honour, and kep eek myn estat';
And after that day we never had debat.
God help me so, I was to him as kynde
As eny wyf fro Denmark unto Inde,
And al so trewe was he unto me:
I pray to God that sitte in magesté
So blesse his soule, for his mercy deere.
Now wol I say my tale if ye wol heere." 6410

The Frere lough whan he had herd al this:
"Now, dame," quod he, "so have I joye and blis,
This is a long preambel of a tale."
And whan the Sompnour herd the Frere gale,
"Lo!" quod this Sompnour, "for Goddes armes tuo,
A frer wol entremet him evermo:
Lo, goode men, a flie and eek a frere
Woln falle in every dissche and matiere.
What spekst thou of perambulacioun?

What? ambil, or trot; or pees, or go sit doun;
Thou lettest oure disport in this matere."
"Ye, woltow so, sir sompnour!" quod the Frere:
"Now, by my fay, I schal, er that I go,
Telle of a sompnour such a tale or tuo,
That alle the folk schuln laughen in this place."
"Now, ellis, frere, I byschrew thy face."
Quod this Sompnour, "and I byschrewe me,
But if I telle tales tuo or thre
Of freres, er I come to Sydingborne,
That I schal make thin herte for to morne:
For wel I wot thi paciens is goon."
Oure hoste cride, "pees, and that anoon;"
And sayde, "Let the womman telle hir tale.
Ye fare as folkes that dronken ben of ale.
Do, dame, tel forth your tale, and that is best."
"Al redy, sir," quod sche, "right as you lest,
If I have licence of this worthy frere."
"Yis, dame," quod he, "tel forth, and I schal heere."

THE WYF OF BATHES TALE.

In olde dayes of the kyng Arthour,
Of which that Britouns speken gret honour.

6429.—*Sydingborne.* Sittingbourne, about half way between Rochester and Canterbury.

The wyf of Bathes tale. The source from which Chaucer took this story is somewhat uncertain, but it was very probably the subject of a French lay. Percy printed a ballad entitled *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, which is founded on the same plot. The story of Florent, in Gower, *Conf. Amant.*, book i, bears a close resemblance to it.

Al was this lond fulfilled of fayrie;
The elf-queen, with hir joly compaignye,
Daunced ful oft in many a grene mede.
This was the old oppynyoun as I rede;
I speke of many hundrid yer ago;
But now can no man see noon elves mo.
For now the grete charité and prayeres
Of lymytours and other holy freres,
That sechen every lond and every streem,
As thik as motis in the sonne-beem,
Blessynge halles, chambres, kichenes, and boures,
Citees and burghes, castels hihe and toures,
Thropes and bernes, shepnes and dayeries,
That makith that ther ben no fayeries.
For ther as wont was to walken an elf,
Ther walkith noon but the lymytour himself,
In undermeles and in morwenynges,
And saith his matyns and his holy thinges
As he goth in his lymytacioun.
Wommen may now go saufly up and doun,
In every bussch, and under every tre,
Ther is non other incubus but he,
And he ne wol doon hem no dishonour.
And so bifel it, that this king Arthour
Had in his hous a lusty bacheler,

6463. The MS. Harl. reads this line, evidently incorrectly, *And ne wol but doon hem dishonour.* In the previous line, the same manuscript reads erroneously *incumbent* instead of *incubus*.

That on a day com rydyng fro ryver:
And happed, al alone as sche was born,
He saugh a mayde walkyng him byforn,
Of which mayden anoon, maugré hir heed,
By verray fors byraft hir maydenhed.
For which oppressioun was such clamour,
And such pursuyte unto kyng Arthour,
That dampned was the knight and schuld be ded
By cours of lawe, and schuld have lost his heed,
(Paraventure such was the statut tho,)
But that the queen and other ladys mo
So longe preyeden thay the kyng of grace,
Til he his lif hath graunted in the place,
And gaf him to the queen, al at hir wille
To chese wethir sche wold him save or spille.
The queen thanked the kyng with al hir might;
And after thus sche spak unto the knight,
Whan that sche saugh hir tyme upon a day:
"Thow stondest yet," quod sche, "in such array,
That of thy lyf hastow no sewerté;
I graunte thy lif, if thou canst telle me,
What thing is it that wommen most desiren:
Be war, and keep thy nek-bon fro the iren.
And if thou canst not tellen it anoon,

6466.—*fro ryver.* From hawking. *Conf.*, l. 13665. Tyrwhitt has given several examples of the same phrase as used in French by Froissart,—"Le Comte de Flandres estoit tousjours en riviere" (v. i, c. 140) ....King Edward "alloit chacun jour ou en chace ou *en riviere.*" (ib. c. 210).

Yet wol I give the leve for to goon
A twelfmonth and a day, it for to lere
An answar suffisaunt in this matiere.
And seurté wol I have, er that thou pace,
Thy body for to yelden in this place."
Wo was this knight, and sorwfully he siked;
But what? he may not doon al as him liked.
And atte last he ches him for to wende,
And come agein right at the yeres ende
With swich answer as God him wolde purveye:
And takith his leve, and wendith forth his weye.
He sekith every hous and every place,
Wher so he hopith for to fynde grace,
To lerne what thing wommen loven most:
But he ne couthe arryven in no cost,
Wher as he mighte fynde in this matiere
Two creatures accordyng in fere.
Some sayden, wommen loven best richesse,
Some sayde honour, and some sayde jolynesse,
Some riche array, some sayden lust on bedde,
And ofte tyme to be wydow and wedde.
Some sayden owre herte is most i-eased
Whan we ben y-flaterid and y-preised:
He goth ful neigh the soth, I wil not lye;
A man schal wynne us best with flaterye;

6506.—*Two creatures.* The Harl. MS. reads, *To these thinges accordyng in fere.*

6512.—*y-preised.* The Harl. MS. reads, *y-pleased*, but the reading I have adopted seems to give the best sense.

And with attendaunce, and with busynesse
Ben we y-limed both more and lesse.
And some sayen, that we loven best
For to be fre, and to doon as us lest,
And that no man repreve us of oure vice,
But say that we ben wys, and no thing nyce.
For trewely ther is noon of us alle,
If eny wight wold claw us on the galle,
That we nyl like, for he saith us soth:
Assay, and he schal fynd it, that so doth.
For be we never so vicious withinne,
We schuln be holde wys and clene of synne.
And some sayen, that gret delit han we
For to be holden stabil and secré,
And in oon purpos stedfastly to duelle,
And nought bywreye thing that men us telle.
But that tale is not worth a rakes stele.
Pardy, we wymmen can right no thing hele,
Witnes on Mida; wil ye here the tale?
Ovyd, among his other thinges smale,
Sayde, Mida had under his lange heris
Growyng upon his heed tuo asses eeris;
The whiche vice he hid, as he best might,
Ful subtilly fro every mannes sight,
That, save his wyf, ther wist of that nomo;
He loved hir most, and trusted hir also;

6523.—*like.* Tyrwhitt reads *kike*; but the best MSS. I have consulted agree in *like*, or *loke*, the former being the reading of MS. Harl.

He prayed hir, that to no creature
Sche schulde tellen of his disfigure.
Sche swor him, nay, for al this world to wynne,
Sche nolde do that vilonye, or synne,
To make hir housband have so foul a name:
Sche wold not tel it for hir oughne schame.
But natheles hir thoughte that sche dyde,
That sche so long a counseil scholde hyde;
Hir thought it swal so sore about hir hert,
That needely som word hir most astert;
And sins sche dorst not tel it unto man,
Doun to a marreys faste by sche ran,
Til sche cam ther, hir herte was on fuyre:
And as a bytoure bumblith in the myre,
Sche layd hir mouth unto the water doun.
'Bywrey me not, thou watir, with thi soun,'
Quod sche, 'to the I telle it, and nomo,
Myn housbond hath long asse eeris tuo.
Now is myn hert al hool, now is it oute,
I might no lenger kepe it out of doute.'
Her may ye se, theigh we a tyme abyde,
Yet out it moot, we can no counseil hyde.
The remenaunt of the tale, if ye wil here,
Redith Ovid, and ther ye mow it leere.
This knight, of which my tale is specially,
Whan that he saugh he might nought come therby,
This is to say, that wommen loven most,
Withinne his brest ful sorwful was the gost.
But hom he goth, he might not lenger sojourne,

The day was come, that hom-ward most he torne.
And in his way, it hapnyd him to ride
In al his care, under a forest side,
Wher as he saugh upon a daunce go
Of ladys four and twenty, and yit mo.
Toward this ilke daunce he drough ful yerne,
In hope that he som wisdom schuld i-lerne;
But certeynly, er he com fully there,
Vanysshid was this daunce, he nyste where;
No creature saugh he that bar lif,
Sauf on the greene he saugh sittyng a wyf,
A fouler wight ther may no man devyse.
Agens the knight this olde wyf gan ryse,
And sayd, "Sir knight, heer forth lith no way.
Tel me what ye seekyn, by your fay.
Paradventure it may the better be:
Thise olde folk con mochil thing," quod sche.
"My lieve modir," quod this knight, "certayn,
I am but ded but if that I can sayn
What thing is it that wommen most desire:
Couthe ye me wisse, I wold wel quyt your huyre."
"Plight me thy trouth her in myn hond," quod sche,
"The nexte thing that I require the,
Thou schalt it doo, if it be in thy might,
And I wol telle it the, er it be night."
"Have her my trouthe," quod the knight, "I graunte."
"Thanne," quod sche, "I dar me wel avaunte,
Thy lif is sauf, for I wol stonde therby,
Upon my lif the queen wol say as I:

Let se, which is the proudest of hem alle,
That werith on a coverchief or a calle,
That dar say nay of thing I schal the teche.
Let us go forth withouten more speche."
Tho rowned sche a pistil in his eere,
And bad him to be glad, and have no fere.
Whan thay ben comen to the court, this knight
Sayd, be had holde his day, that he hight,
Al redy was his answer, as he sayde.
Ful many a noble wyf, and many a mayde,
And many a wydow, for that thay ben wyse,
The queen hirself sittyng as a justise,
Assemblid ben, his answer for to hiere.
And after-ward this knight was bode appiere:
To every wight comaundid was silence,
And that the knight schuld telle in audience,
What thing that worldly wommen loven best.
This knight ne stood not stille, as doth a best,
But to the questioun anoon answerde,
With manly voys, that al the court it herde:
"My liege lady, generally," quod he,
"Wommen desiren to have soveraynté,
As wel over hir housbond as over hir love,
And for to be in maystry him above.
This is your most desir, though ye me kille;
Doth as yow list, I am heer at your wille."
In al the court ne was ther wyf ne mayde,
Ne wydow, that contraried that he sayde;
But sayden, he was worthy have his lif.

And with that word upstart that olde wif,
Which that the knight saugh sittyng on the grene.
"Mercy," quod sche, "my soveraign lady queene,
Er that your court departe, doth me right.
I taughte this answer unto the knight,
For which he plighte me his trouthe there,
The firste thing that I wold him requere,
He wold it do, if it lay in his might.
Before this court then pray I the, sir knight,"
Quod sche, "that thou me take unto thy wif,
For wel thou wost, that I have kept thy lif:
If I say fals, sey nay, upon thy fey."
This knight answerd, "Allas and waylawey!
I wot right wel that such was my byhest.
For Goddes love, as chese a new request:
Tak al my good, and let my body go."
"Nay," quod sche than, "I schrew us bothe tuo.
For though that I be foule, old, and pore,
I nolde for al the metal ne for the ore,
That under erthe is grave, or lith above,
But I thy wife were and eek thy love."
"My love?" quod he, "nay, nay, my dampnacioun.
Allas! that eny of my nacioun
Schuld ever so foule disparagid be!"
But al for nought; the ende is this, that he
Constreigned was, he needes most hir wedde,
And takith his wyf, and goth with hir to bedde.
Now wolden som men say paradventure,
That for my necgligence I do no cure

To telle yow the joye and tharray
That at that fest was maad that ilke day.
To which thing schortly answeren I schal,
And say ther nas feste ne joy at al,
Ther nas but hevynes and mochil sorwe:
For prively he weddyd hir in a morwe,
And alday hudde him as doth an oule,
So wo was him, his wyf loked so foule.
Gret was the wo the knight had in his thought
Whan he was with his wyf on bedde brought,
He walwith, and he torneth to and fro.
His olde wyf lay smylyng ever mo,
And sayd, "O deere housbond, *benedicite*,
Fareth every knight with his wyf as ye?
Is this the lawe of king Arthures hous?
Is every knight of his thus daungerous?
I am your oughne love, and eek your wyf,
I am sche that hath savyd your lyf,
And certes ne dede I yow never unright.
Why fare ye thus with me the firste night?
Ye fare lik a man that had left his wit.
What is my gult? for Godes love, tel me it,
And it schal be amendid, if that I may."
"Amendid!" quod this knight, "allas! nay, nay,
It wol nought ben amendid, never mo;
Thow art so lothly, and so old also,
And therto comen of so lowh a kynde,
That litil wonder is though I walwe and wynde;
So wolde God, myn herte wolde brest!"

"Is this," quod sche, "the cause of your unrest?"
"Ye, certeynly," quod he, "no wonder is!"
"Now sire," quod sche, "I couthe amende al this,
If that me list, er it were dayes thre,
So wel ye mighte bere yow to me.
But for ye speken of such gentilesse
As is descendit out of old richesse,
Therfor schuld ye ben holden gentil men:
Such arrogaunce is not worth an hen.
Lok who that is most vertuous alway,
Privé and pert, and most entendith ay
To do the gentil dedes that he can,
Tak him for the grettest gentil man.
Crist wol we clayme of him oure gentilesse,
Nought of oure eldres for her olde richesse.
For though thay give us al her heritage,
For which we clayme to be of high parage,
Yit may thay not biquethe, for no thing,
To noon of us, so vertuous lyvyng,
That made hem gentil men y-callid be,
And bad us folwe hem in such degré.
Wel can the wyse poet of Florence,
That hatte Daunt, speke of this sentence;
Lo, in such maner of rym is Dauntes tale:
Ful seeld uprisith by his braunchis smale

6690 6700 6710

6700.—*her olde.* The Harl. MS. reads, *for our gret richesse.*
6709.—*Dauntes tale.* The words of Dante (*Purg.* vii, 121) are:—
Rade volte risurge per li rami
L'humana probitate; et questo vuole
Quei che la da, perche da se si chiami.

Prowes of man, for God of his prowesse
Wol that we claime of him our gentilesse:
For of our auncestres we no thing clayme
But temporal thing, that men may hurt and mayme.
Ek every wight wot this as wel as I,
If gentiles were plaunted naturelly
Unto a certayn lignage doun the line,
Privé ne apert, thay wolde never fine
To don of gentilesce the fair office,
Thay might nought doon no vileny or vice.
Tak fuyr and ber it in the derkest hous
Bitwixe this and the mount Caukasous,
And let men shit the dores, and go thenne,
Yit wol the fuyr as fair and lighte brenne
As twenty thousand men might it biholde;
His office naturel ay wol it holde,
Up peril on my lif, til that it dye.
Her may ye se wel, how that genterye
Is nought annexid to possessioun,
Sithins folk ne doon her operacioun
Alway, as doth the fuyr, lo, in his kynde.
For God it wot, men may ful often fynde
A lordes sone do schame and vilonye.
And he that wol have pris of his gentrie,
For he was boren of a gentil hous,
And had his eldres noble and vertuous,
And nyl himselve doo no gentil dedes,
Ne folw his gentil aunceter, that deed is,

6713.—*auncestres*. Other MSS, with Tyrwhitt, read *our elders may we*, which is perhaps the better reading.

He is nought gentil, be he duk or erl;
For vileyn synful deedes maketh a cherl.
For gentilnesse nys but renomé
Of thin auncestres, for her heigh bounté,
Which is a straunge thing to thy persone:
Thy gentilesce cometh fro God alloone.
Than comth oure verray gentilesse of grace,
It was no thing biquethe us with oure place.
Thinketh how nobil, as saith Valerius,
Was thilke Tullius Hostilius,
That out of povert ros to high noblesse.
Redith Senek, and redith eek Boece,
Ther schuln ye se expresse, that no dred is,
That he is gentil that doth gentil dedis.
And therfor, lieve housbond, I conclude,
Al were it that myn auncetres wer rude,
Yit may the highe God, and so hope I,
Graunte me grace to lyve vertuously:
Than am I gentil, whan that I bygynne
To lyve vertuously, and weyven synne.
" And ther as ye of povert me repreve,
The heighe God, on whom that we bilieve,
In wilful povert ches to lede his lif:
And certes, every man, mayden, or wif
May understonde, that Jhesus, heven king,

6741.—*For gentilnesse.* Tyrwhitt refers to Boethius, *de Consol.* iii, Pr. 6, for much of the reasoning here adopted by Chaucer.

6761.—*lede.* The MS. Harl. has *lese*, which appears to have been a mere error of the scribe.

Ne wold not chese a vicious lyvyng.
Glad povert is an honest thing certayn;
This wol Senek and other clerkes sayn.
Who that holt him payd of his povert,
I hold him riche, al had he nought a schert.
He that coveitith is a pore wight,
For he wold have that is not in his might.
But he that nought hath, ne coveyteth nought to have,
Is riche, although ye hold him but a knave.
Verray povert is synne proprely.
"Juvenal saith of povert merily:
The pore man whan he goth by the way,
Bifore the theves he may synge and play.
Povert is hateful good; and, as I gesse,
A ful gret brynger out of busynesse;
A gret amender eek of sapiens
To him, that takith it in paciens.
Povert is this, although it seme elenge,
Possessioun that no wight wil chalenge.
Povert ful often, whan a man is lowe,
Makith him his God and eek himself to knowe.
Povert a spectacle is, as thinkith me,

6774.—*Juvenal saith.* Sat. x, l. 22,—

Cantabit vacuus coram latrone viator.

6777.—*Povert is hateful good.* This is taken from a pretended dialogue between the emperor Adrian and the philosopher Secundus, which is given in Vincent of Beauvais, *Spec. Hist.*, lib. x, c. 71, and is not unfrequently found in a separate form in old manuscripts. To the question, "Quid est paupertas?" the philosopher replies, "*Odibile bonum; sanitatis mater*; remotio curarum; *sapientiæ repertrix*; negotium sine damno; *possessio absque calumnia*; sine sollicitudine felicitas."

Thurgh which he may his verray frendes se,
And therfor, sir, syth that I yow nought greve,
Of my povert no more me repreve,
"Now sir, of elde ye repreve me:
And certes, sir, though noon auctorité
Were in no book, ye gentils of honour
Sayn, that men schuld an old wight doon favour,
And clepe him fader, for your gentilesse;
And auctours I schal fynden, as I gesse.
"Now ther that ye sayn I am foul and old,
Than drede yow nought to ben a cokewold.
For filthe and elde, al so mot I the,
Ben grete wardeyns upon chastité.
But natheles, sith I knowe your delyt,
I schal fulfille youre worldly appetyt.
Chese now," quod sche, "oon of these thinges tweye,
To have me foul and old til that I deye,
And be to yow a trewe humble wyf,
And never yow displease in al my lyf:
Or elles ye wol have me yong and fair,
And take your aventure of the repair
That schal be to your hous bycause of me,
Or in som other place it may wel be:
Now chese yourselven whethir that yow liketh."
This knight avysith him, and sore sikith,

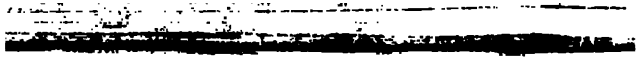
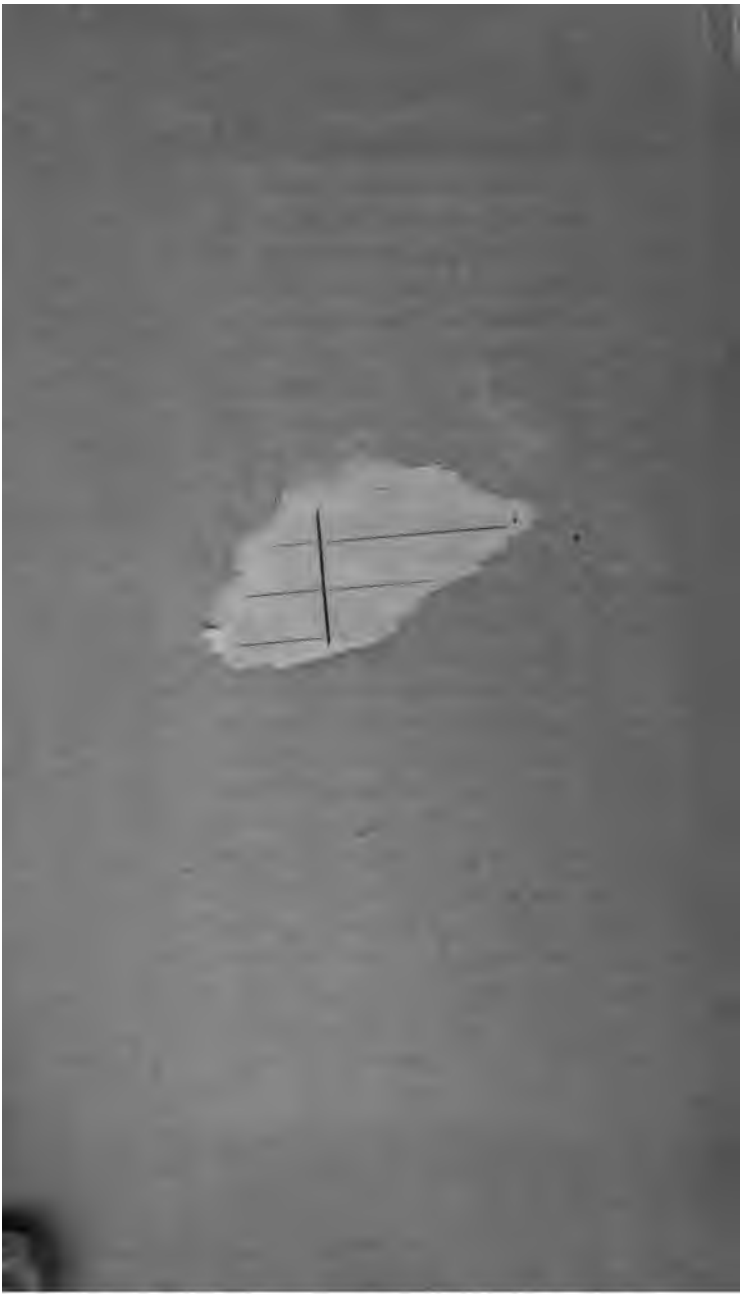
6797.—*al so*, or as it is commonly written, *also*, is the Anglo-Saxon *ealswa*, or *eal swa*. Tyrwhitt, apparently not aware of this, has added another *so*, not found in any of the MSS., and reads the line,—

For filthe, and elde also, so mot I the.

But atte last he sayd in this manere:
" My lady and my love, and wif so deere,
I putte me in your wyse governaunce,
Chesith yourself which may be most pleasaunce
And most honour to yow and me also,
I do no fors the whether of the tuo:
For as yow likith, it suffisith me."
" Than have I gete of yow the maystry," quod sche,
" Sith I may govern and chese as me list?"
" Ye certis, wyf," quod he, " I hold it best."
" Kys me," quod sche, " we ben no lenger wrothe,
For, by my trouthe, I wol be to yow bothe,
This is to say, ye, bothe fair and good.
I pray to God that I mot sterve wood,
But I be to yow al so good and trewe,
As ever was wyf, siththen the world was newe;
And but I be to morow as fair to seen,
As eny lady, emperesse, or queen,
That is bitwixe thest and eek the west,
Doth by my lyf right even as yow lest.
Cast up the cortyns, and look what this is."
And whan the knyght saugh verrayly al this,
That sche so fair was, and so yong therto,
For joye he hent hir in his armes tuo:
His herte bathid in a bath of blisse,

6831.—The second Cambridge MS. reads, instead of this line,—
And so they slept tille the morwe gray;
And than she saide, when it was day,
" Caste up the curteyn, loke howe it is."

A thousand tyme on rowe he gan hir kisse:
And sche obeyed him in every thing,
That mighte doon him pleisauns or likyng.
And thus thay lyve unto her lyves ende
In parfyt joye; and Jhesu Crist us sende
Housbondes meke, yonge, and freissche on bedde,
And grace to overbyde hem that we wedde.
And eek I pray to Jhesus schort her lyves,
That wil nought be governed after her wyves.
And old and angry nygardes of despense,
God send hem sone verray pestilence!

END OF VOL. I.

RICHARDS, PRINTER, 100, ST. MARTIN'S LANE.